

Continued Proposal¹ on Mekong Community Networking and Ecological Trading (MECO- ECOTRA 2010-2013)



**Social Policy Ecology Research Institute (SPERI)
December, 2009
Vietnam**

¹ MECO-ECOTRA proposal is set for 10 years timeframe 2005-2015.
The 1st phase proposal was MECO-ECOTRA 2006-2009.
The 2nd phase proposal is continued MECO-ECOTRA 2009-2012.

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Abbreviation

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AIPP	Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact is a regional indigenous peoples' network based in Chiang Mai, Thailand.
CESD	Centre for Ethnicity Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University
CODE	Consultancy on Development
CIRUM	Culture Identity and Resources Use Management
CHESH	Centre for Human Ecology Studies of Highlands
CIRD	Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development
FFS	Farmer Field School
HEPA	Human Ecology Practice Area
ICCO	Interchurch Organisation for Cooperation and Development
CBI	Community Based Institution
CBO	Community Based Organisation
ID	Institutional Development
OD	Organisational Development
IKAP	Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples
MECO-ECOTRA	MEkong COmmunity Networking and ECOlogical TRAding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TERRA	Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance
TVS	Thailand Volunteer Services
RCSD	Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development, Chiang Mai University
PPP	Public Private Partnership
TEW	Towards Ethnic Women
SPERI	Social Policy Ecology Research Institute
VTC	Vietnam Multimedia Television
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
WTO	World Trade Organisation
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

Summary

Building up a stronger grassroots traditional civil society's network action in the Mekong region is the MECO-ECOTRA and SPERI's missions and strategies.

This continued proposal of 2010 – 2013 is footing from “*MECO-ECOTRA development strategic framework (2005 -2015) which have been implementing via a contract No. VN102011 – ICCO – SPERI at the first three years 2006 – 2009*”.

Due to the landless, identity crisis and livelihood security of around 60 millions of the Indigenous Ethnic Minority population in Mekong sub-region, especially under plunderers of the untransparent development purposes from an engaged between the multinational companies and the ruthless power who have been taking always the natural resources from the poor, so the most important action for different CBOs, NGOs, Border Media, Independent Researcher, Progressive Officials and Youths who are concerning about the value system of the Indigenous Ethnic Minority population should build a *different network action* in order to find *where is the justice for the poor?!*

The 2010 – 2013's Planning in this program is *parallel two responsible functions*: one will be *continued by MECO-ECOTRA* that has been on behalf of *Community Based Organization*; and the other will be *continued by SPERI* that is playing as the role of *bridging and coordinating between the civil society – the Media and the Pubic*.

MECO – ECOTRA and its challenges, achievements and its transformation will focus on the three themes including: 1) Community Institution in Watershed Resource Management to meet with grassroots democratization strategy; 2) Eco-farming to meet with grassroots knowledge and participation in Land Use Planning & environmental protection; and 3) Community based Eco-Enterprise to meet with fair market strategy. A detailed account of MECO-ECOTRA expected outcomes and activities for Jan 2010 to Dec 2013 are then given.

SPERI will act as the facilitator and play as the key partner of MECO-ECOTRA including the revised structure of SPERI and its activities and outcomes for this same period.

We wish to start implementing the activities stated in this program proposal in January 2010.

I. Mekong context

Regional Mekong is recognized as an area rich in diverse mosaics of natural and cultural heritage. The Mekong watershed, shared by six countries is the home to around 60 millions of indigenous people and other marginalized groups. Natural endemic ecosystems and agro ecosystems offer treasures in biodiversity which form the basis of traditional livelihoods. Traditional civil society supports these livelihoods and is the self maintained living heritage of these communities inherently accepted and respected by the local people².

Unfortunately too often the vision of local and centralized governments is too narrow to see the inherent organizational and practical strengths of traditional civil society. Spurred on by the drive of globalization and glimmering if not distorted dreams of becoming more developed, governments systematically and forcibly undermine traditional civil society in the Mekong. The more intelligent and insightful way to approach development that has been ignored is to support the strengths of traditional civil society while providing the recourses, information and skills required flourishing within the context of current world challenges. Given the crises state of the environment and dwindling reserves of energy and resources, traditional civil society has something to offer for our future long term development context. Traditional civil society may provide us with the practical and time tested solutions to meet the requirement to shift to lower energy and resource dependant economies in the background of an increased ethical concern and respect for the environment.

Mekong countries are becoming increasingly interconnected to the global market and are inevitably being affected by the processes of globalization, industrialization and international flows of capital, technology and people. Natural resource exploitation and new development programs that drive the process of globalization frequently devastate areas rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage. With new development schemes there has been a failure from governments in the region to address the *actual needs and concerns of local people*. Most development schemes fail to improve the quality of life for marginalized people, they create *disparity in the social structure* and there is often the *lack of community consultation and participation*. This goes together with an immature view from governments who don't understand the value that traditional civil society and local knowledge has to offer local people.

Examples of forced development schemes that have failed and are causing problems for local people include; resettlement programs, introduction of cash crops, unsustainable forestry operations, promotion of industrial agriculture and timber plantations, establishment of 'new rural areas', privatization and exploitation of natural resources. Not only do these projects ignore the basic reality and needs of marginalized people they also are inconsistent with solutions that offer a bright future in the context of current world environmental challenges such as global

² This is shown by examples of traditional civil society in Den Xa Vang village in Laos where underneath the matrix and confusion of government resettlement programs still remains a respect for traditional ownership of land.
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warming and an unstable global economy based on the supply of dwindling energy reserves and resources.

Challenges

Minority people are in threat of the dissolution of traditional practice, land ownership, livelihood, culture and community spirit, their *values* and spiritual belief. This contributes to a loss of identity and is a consequence of; (1) loss of land and forest rich in biodiversity, the degradation of fertile land and erosion of soil; (2) globalization and the promotion of a demanding consumer society based on the exploitation of natural resources; (3) 'development' schemes brought in by 'outsiders' such as multi-national companies; (4) Resettlement programs and displacement³. Inherent in all of these issues is the top-down control and insensitive approaches from centralized governments that have contrasting values and vision to minority people.

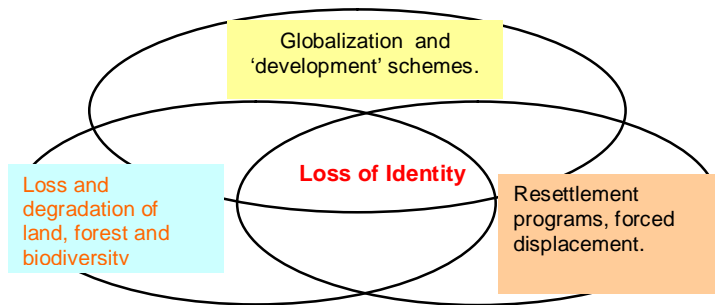


Figure 1: loss of identity can occur from a combination of different key challenges in the Mekong, including the degradation of land, forest and biodiversity, resettlement programs, globalization and development schemes.

*SPERI's understanding of the challenges that face the Mekong is rooted in a long history of development work. SPERI has worked with the key concepts of **poverty structure** and **values crises** throughout this time. These basic ideas continue to underlie the approach of current work which is in continuous evolution.*

Causes of *loss of identity* relate to an imposed *poverty structure* and this imposition is intimately linked to a *values crises*. Poverty structure is based on three key issues (figure 2); 1) *Unconfidence* – minority people often feel unconfident in the context of the formal system. According to this system their ways and traditions are seen as backward; new and 'exciting'

³ Resettlement programs – refers to the displacement of people from their traditional lands, the merging of communities into larger centers that are easier for centralized governments to control and the relocation of people due to extractive operations, such as mining and hydro-power.

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development approaches are given almost like propaganda. In these new approaches minority people often lack knowledge and resources; they are made to feel unconfident in their vast wealth of traditional knowledge which is of limited use in the exploitive industries that are recommended⁴ to them. 2) *No Ownership* – No ownership relates to the imposition of a formal system that does not recognize or value traditional ownership. 3) *Isolation* – Minority people are often isolated from the decision making processes that effect their lives. There is little participation in preparation of development policy/programs or economic development schemes and as a group they exist on the margins of society in general.

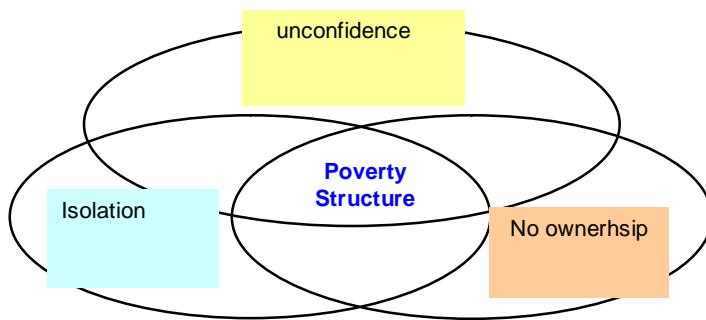


Figure 2: Poverty structure, a combination of these three major issues (proposal 2006-09).

The value crisis that has introduced the poverty structure is related to three key factors (figure 3); 1) *Maximizing input into a global economy and profit seeking* – Related to a change in values to those of a capital based society, to measure wealth by growth of GDP, profit and material possessions, excluding those measures related to a sense of well being. This drives the search for foreign capital and export of product entering into non-local markets and leads to a dependency on these markets, when independence was previously achieved by self sufficiency or self reliance 2) *High technology and monocultures* - high yielding crops – the approach to turn to technological solutions pursued by authorities is one that ignores the appropriateness of adapted local solutions in exchange for the idea that modern technology is always somehow better. Often this is an assumption that is rarely questioned, even in event of total failure of various programs that really on these solutions. With the reliance on technology is the pursuit of mono culture; the promotion of high yielding cash crops, industrial agriculture on a large scale and a homogenization of society in general. 3) *Industrialization and modernization* – these values and approaches are currently accepted as the way forward by the majority. The values that reflect these approaches are in stark contrast to those of minority people a situation of social disparity between these two groups’ results.

⁴ Recommended by authorities - people are conditioned into believing that the authority is always right, this is especially the case in a one party system, where there is no question of decisions made by the government.

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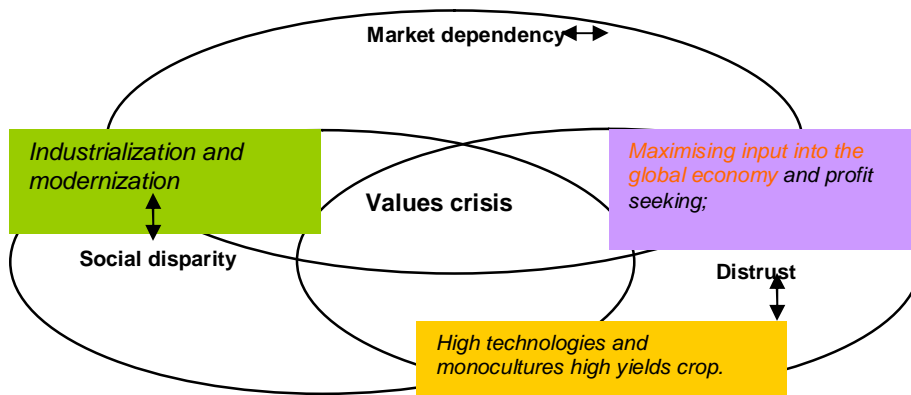


Figure 3: the current context in Vietnam - new crises facing indigenous communities, a combination of three major issues; social gaps/disparity, market dependency and distrust (SPERI, 2009).

Mekong countries understandably have ambitions of becoming more developed nations. This development process is focused on industrialization schemes that are fueled to a large extent by the exploitation and export of natural resources. Current extractive industries are increasing in intensity and include; mining, forestry, massive hydropower operations, industrial chemical agriculture and contraction of land for cash crops and plantations. To make way for further intensification of these development efforts the legal framework is being reworked to give favor to privatization and extraction of local resources. The presence of more firms and businesses in the areas of indigenous communities threatens the maintenance of community structure and traditional practices. Agricultural policies geared towards modernization with hybrid and high-yielding crops and use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides threaten communities with the loss of local knowledge and know how and the extinction of local species.

To fit a model of industrialization, education systems are being reworked to suit a high paced development approach. State vocational training curriculum has been revamped with an industrial focus. There is an emphasis on mechanical skills and a focus on shifting an agrarian population to more urban sectors such as tourism, entertainment, and other such services. For instance, the latest proposal from the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs in Vietnam targets to train 1^{mill} farmers per year of which 700,000 will be trained in the non-agricultural sector; and 300,000 in mechanical and modernized agricultural skills.

Indigenous youth in the highlands are often not well accommodated for in the formal educational system. The shift towards industrial topics at vocational training schools represents a move away from the forms of knowledge and methods of teaching that suit these youth. Indigenous youth will continue to be marginalized in the new system and at the same time will lose future prospects of a traditional farming career with associated traditional forms of knowledge and community education lost forever.

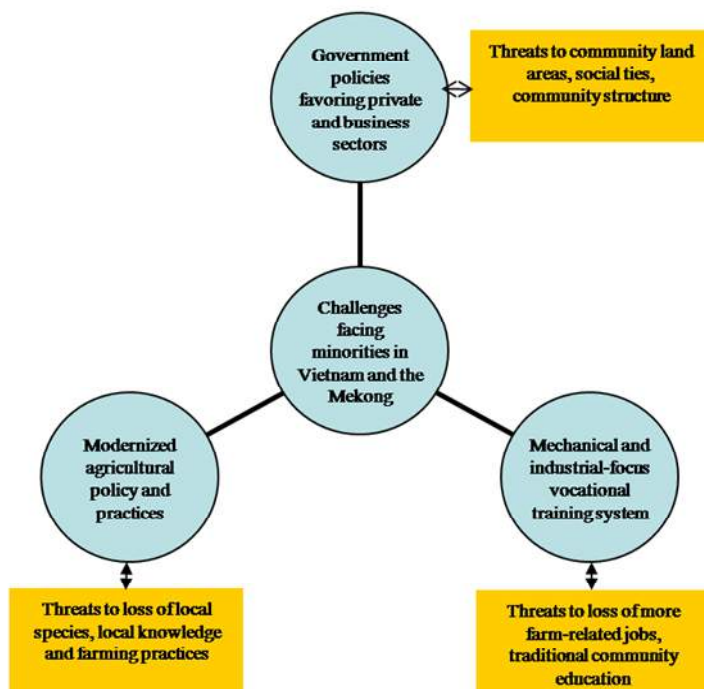


Figure 4: Challenges facing minorities in the Mekong including; a mechanical and industrial focused vocational training system, modernized agricultural policy and practices and government policies favoring private and business sectors (SPERI, 2009).

Challenges facing Mekong countries

Vietnam

Vietnam is well on its way to become an industrialized country⁵, at a pace fast pace that is continually increasing. Meanwhile awareness of the general population about possible problems or issues that may arise in the process of development is relatively low. The capacity and skill of the state needed to govern this changing society is not mature enough to cope with the inequalities, ethnic discrimination, disparities and environmental degradation that can occur in the context of Globalization.

In 2008, further details of the implementation⁶ of Resolution 7th defined possible solutions to *modernize and industrialize the agricultural sector and rural areas*. Solutions include transforming the economic structure of agriculture which set a target that production of goods from rural areas must serve national food security. Establishment of production areas must focus

⁵ In the APEC Economic summit organized in late 2006, Vietnam proposed a range of initiatives for boosting trade facilitation, emergency response strategy, fighting corruption and improving legislation concerning intellectual property. The vice prime minister made it clear that ‘Vietnam’s admission to APEC marked an important milestone. It sets the course in implementation of Party and State foreign policy of ‘openness, multi-lateralization, and integration into the world economy’. In January 2007 Vietnam officially became the WTO’s 150th member.

⁶ Congress 7th of the Executive Committee of the Central Communist Party of Vietnam Term IX. Online ref: http://www.vista.gov.vn/portal/page?_pageid=33,355948&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&pers_id=355716&item_id=368162&p_details=1
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on large-scale, technological applications of high-yield crops and animal species, a focus on quantity with certain products and quality of others. Increasing exports for agro-products e.g. forest, seafood, plants and animals aims to maintain a large and stable market and to meet with WTO requirements.

Ineffective centralization of management of forest in the hands of state-owned forestry enterprises still has a heavy cost for local people. Firms and CEOs have an open door to accumulate highland and lowland areas for long-term use, to set up industrial parks, economic zones, hydro powers, mining and golf-resorts. Expansion of dam projects continues to take land away from indigenous communities and thus, associated community structure and cultural bonds to land. In the agricultural sector there is growing advertisement by government and companies on public media - national Televisions, to encourage farmers to adopt new commercial farming practices such as the extension of exotic hybrid crops and promotes the use of new fertilizer and pesticide brands. Thus there is further movement away from the traditional forms of agriculture that have supported the community in a sustainable way for so long. Conversion of agricultural land to plantations is expanding at an alarming rate (now totaling over 2,000,000 ha)⁷.

In the political arena, actual participation and representation of indigenous voices in national policy agenda including decision-making processes is weakly addressed⁸. The perception that indigenous communities are backward is changing; yet in practice these people are still subject to much discrimination. Recognition of the important stewardship role of communities living in the watershed and/or national parks is almost non - existent. In economic terms, the gaps between lowlanders and highlanders remain wide. Poverty reduction for some indigenous families may be improving to some extent; yet from a whole systems perspective, open the free-market based economy has created new challenges for poor people who are often cheated from their way of life in great disillusionment. Instances show that indigenous people feel a stronger degree of market dependency by increasing reliance on the use of exotic species and associated chemical and pesticide additives.

The above challenges have a profound impact on 15 million indigenous people who also suffer from development by Multi-national companies. Multi-national companies that operate in Thailand and elsewhere, now look to Vietnam (Central highlands, Northern mountains of Vietnam) to exploit natural resources where indigenous people are living and where MECO-ECOTRA has been active.

Thailand

Thailand has had more or less 40 years of ‘development⁹’ experience. It is essential to draw lessons learned in detail and relate them to farmers and NGOs both in Vietnam and Laos to learn of the contextual challenges facing indigenous communities; especially issues concerning

⁷ <http://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Vietnam.htm>

⁸ Grassroots Democracy regulations are clearly defined but weakly conducted; and ‘practice varies from locality to locality. Vietnam Development Report 2009: Resource Mobilization. Online ref: http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/files/docs/Outline_of_VDR_2009.doc

⁹ Development here refers to the process of industrialization etc.

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impacts from hydro-power dams, mining projects, or conversion of land for plantations. Poor indigenous have been suffering since the 1980s under the influence of multinational companies together with vested government interest. These forces are continually expanding toward Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Economic ‘development’ projects of these kinds have always brought environmental concerns and ignore the rights of many indigenous communities to their livelihood. This has led to the continuous and current issues of ethnicity conflict and discrimination, social injustice, economic collapse and political unrest.

There is enormous potential to make connections and network with the grassroots and NGO bodies in Thailand. Past activities and future opportunities include study visits, learning exchanges for Vietnam and Lao farmers, NGO activists paid to learn from advocacy groups, academic, or youth groups in Thailand (namely AIPP¹⁰, IKAP¹¹, TERRA¹², TVS¹³, and RCSD/CESD¹⁴ of Chiang Mai University).

North and Northeast Thailand in the vicinity of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Nan, Mehong Son and Udon province is an intensive area for the focus of MECO-ECOTRA and networks with NGOs, academics, researchers. It is a hotspot, known for some of the negative impacts on indigenous people mentioned above. It is a focus area of many humanitarian organizations including SPERI. It is an important task for SPERI to organize forums, speaking tours and to invite key speakers including elders and key farmers from communities that have been suffering from these difficulties and challenges. These voices from Thailand have many lessons learned to teach neighboring countries of Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

Laos

Laos is shifting from a self-sufficient to a market-oriented economy by launching many new policy changes. Laos is calling for more foreign direct investment projects such as large scale mining, large dam construction, and conversion of land into large scale commercial plantations. Lao government sees that dollar storage or ‘dollar accumulation’ is a way to promote economic development for the whole country. Multi-national companies continue to move into Lao (Atapu highland, Southern Lao border to Cambodia and to central Lao (Nam Ngum hydropower), down to Luang Prabang (hydropower, plantations, mining)¹⁵.

Lao government also applies a resettlement program aimed at clustering people into ‘stable zones’ to clear the way for large scale projects. Another priority is to discard the traditional mode of production involving local seeds, local knowledge and practices. Favor is given instead to modern modes of production with new technology and high-value crops and species. With new species associated with new agro-technology comes the danger to livelihood security of increased dependency brought about by these new systems. Indigenous communities are now in

¹⁰ AIPP: Asian Indigenous Peoples Pact is a regional indigenous peoples’ network based in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

¹¹ IKAP: Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples

¹² TERRA: Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance

¹³ TVS: Thailand Volunteer Services

¹⁴ RCSD: Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development and CESD: Centre for Ethnicity Studies and Development

¹⁵ <http://www.laoyp.com/industrial/mining-companies/>

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threat of losing their rights to resources, rights to exercise their tradition and to keep their cultural identity alive.

Cambodia

The government in Cambodia focuses on investment concessions for plantations. Major goals are to provide free land for agricultural and agro-industrial plantations and processing for export, which is expected to create jobs and generate income for people living in rural areas. This expectation is limited as workers are mainly brought in from the company's country of origin. Large-scale mining and in particular gold mining is mainly carried out by Australian and Chinese companies on a total area of 155 000 ha. The successful gold mining operations in Laos by Oxiana attracted international companies to pursue gold mining in other countries of the region. Decision making procedures with regards to these kinds of multinational activities is highly centralized, usually involving the Prime Minister or bodies under the Prime Ministers office such as the Cambodia National Petroleum Authority. Multi-national companies are moving into Cambodia (Mondolkiri, Ratanakini) from across the border near the Apatu highlands of Lao and the Central highlands of Vietnam. MECO-ECOTRA has also been active in areas where multi-national companies move in and try to exploit natural resources in order to give local people a voice and opportunity to dialogue, debate, fight and bargain with authorities and multi-national companies.

Yunnan

Yunnan is an area of rich natural biodiversity and indigenous culture. There is a threat of changing cultural values with the increased commercialization that comes with various tourism programs. The social and political context in China is unique and different to other countries in the Mekong region. Livelihoods in areas are similar to the indigenous peoples in Lao, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. This follows the character and diversity of cultural identities and ecological systems inherent to Mekong region. SPERI together with CODE and CIRUM made a brief visit to some areas in Yunnan and attended the 3rd regional indigenous knowledge and biodiversity conference in 2007. These have been the first few small steps to establish initial contact and in extending activities to Yunnan.

Challenges facing indigenous youth

Modernization and industrialization is attracting youth into cities to work. Young people often think working in the industrial zones is a great 'opportunity' to participate in and contribute to 'development'. This is combined with the immature view in mainstream society of a backwardness of traditional people and their ways of life. Modernization is also affecting the lives of young indigenous in the village itself. It is interesting and frightening to see that while youth are moving into the city, simultaneously companies and corporations are moving into indigenous lands in aggressive exploitation of natural resources.

It is possible that 'modernity' does bring some benefits; but traditional forms, practice and livelihoods have been developed over generations and are adapted to fit into the landscape and community, these local solutions still hold valuable keys to create healthy lives. The value systems and lifestyle choices of the current generation is changing at a fast pace with profound

impacts on these communities. Young people are starting to see their traditional way of life which their parents have long nurtured as ‘backward’. They want to leave their communities, their farms, their families; and go to find work in big towns and cities. Impacts from formal education systems give a feeling to youth that ‘modernity’ is everything and they do not realize the disparities in opportunity that exist and the problems that go with the ‘development’ process.

It is a sad irony to observe youth abandoning the high level of local development (in localization, *see annex: 1&2*) at the grassroots that really serves the people in satisfying both their material and spiritual life. Youth now flock to modernity and create a new form of dependency syndrome based on energy and environmental misuse which had not existed previously in traditional people’s lifestyles. An elder pointed out ‘modern ways of life can not create *real wealth*¹⁶’, but youth seem to be lured by the promise of something better, a glimmering mirage on a far off eternal horizon.

When youth leave the village to go work in the cities they represent an extremely vulnerable group within society (particularly in Vietnam and China). Lack of knowledge makes it is really easy for them to get addicted to drugs and alcohol or contract an infectious disease such as HIV. The work in which they engage can be brutal, with long hours, harsh treatment and poor wages. They may engage in illegal activities such as prostitution or drug running and once they go down this road they find themselves falling deeper and deeper into a dark bottomless pit. It is then extremely difficult for them to get out as they are kept at arms length by the rest of society. Problems associated with illegal activities often exist in a grey area within policy and are socially unacceptable. Formal assistance programs are often ineffective or poorly carried out, youth live in real misery in such a situation. As well as addressing the symptoms of this dysfunction within society we should focus on the roots and offer preventative solutions by supporting youth in traditional practice that really fits within the current world and regional context.

Few elders remain in highland communities who are able to maintain a sustainable lifestyle based upon local traditional knowledge and wisdom, it is important and urgent that they pass on this knowledge, yet still less and less youth are learning from them. When the old generation is too frail to protect their culture and way of life, there could be no-one left to carry on the heritage of local practices and wisdom. When working with the youth our question is how we can enhance skills and knowledge to build pride in their traditional culture, meet modern challenges, and develop the confidence and capability to take up leadership roles to keep their community and traditions alive.

Indigenous groups face frequent crises in the context of the current challenges acting in the region such as globalization. They feel disbelief in the formal system¹⁷, often with the concern

¹⁶ Real wealth here indicates – happiness, spiritual values, natural ecosystems, sustainable agro ecosystems; modernity brings allot of waste, plastics etc into the community, an irresponsible use of chemicals and causes many conflict that disrupts peoples sense of wellbeing.

¹⁷ Development policies ad activities from the government, such as the resettlement programs, often leave people feeling frustrated. Local Authorities rarely give feedback or respond to their concerns and problems.

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Where is social justice and dignity? The traditional sociopolitical structure of these communities has value in itself, to meet both human and environmental needs. These systems are respected and are independent from the formal political structure. Even so traditional people often do not have the genuine freedom and opportunity to preserve and practice their own values, sense of identity and livelihood. Youth are fast losing their capacity to carry on these traditions and now are being swallowed up in the pressure to modernize.

MECO-ECOTRA with the partnership of SPERI responds to these challenges with local and regional strategies that are based on building up stronger networks of civil society based on CBI¹⁸ and CBO¹⁹ at the grassroots level in Mekong region. There is an emphasis to support youth in becoming leaders and keepers of good local practice while developing the skills to meet with the modern world and all of its challenges.

The Mission of SPERI²⁰ is therefore to stand beside the marginalized and seek ways to facilitate an environment which offers freedoms and opportunities to voice problems, and promote the strengths of traditional civil society. SPERI nurtures creativity whilst enhancing voluntary participation and local grass roots organizational development through the Mekong Community Networking and Ecological Trading (MECO-ECOTRA) network.

Challenges facing indigenous women & girls.

Indigenous women and girl are vulnerable future due to the whole situation. No spaces and conditions for women and girl to continue to practice their own wisdom and experiences which they learn and adapt from their own interaction with nature in order to maintaining and nurturing their own values. Girls are becoming prostitution for living. Women are selling last valuable for daily surviving....!

II. The strategy of MECO-ECOTRA

An environment for a healthy civil society is developed when voices of different social groups are represented. Communities must also have the opportunity to be responsible for their own self-organized political, social and economic behavior. *Network action* helps key farmers to recognize rights and responsibilities in the policy making and implementing processes. Networking strengthens the power at the grassroots. It reduces the negative impacts caused by centralized power and top down policy implementation. It encourages freedom for the marginalized to participate in decision making processes, promotes transparent institutions and transactions, and brings about social equity that contributes to the local democratization process.

¹⁸ CBI: Community based Institution is based on traditional customary laws and practices that have been re-enforced through building up networks and skills to strengthen these traditional forms of organization in the context of modern influences.

¹⁹ CBO: Community based Organization is based on customary laws and practices that have a traditional role in community organization.

²⁰ SPERI, which has merged from TEW, CHESH and CIRD into an independent organization, has been officially approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology on June 5, 2006.

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MECO-ECOTRA has been built up from key farmers' networks since 1995. (Please see: *annex 3*). It promotes and strengthens civil society in order to achieve a harmonious life, social justice and democracy²¹ for highlanders and indigenous peoples living in the Mekong region.

MECO-ECOTRA lobbies for social – political and economic rights of indigenous peoples including their dignity, beliefs, traditional social institutions, community rights and natural resources.

MECO-ECOTRA promotes **network action** among key farmers at the Mekong regional scale. They take network action to deal with:

- Ideas, policies and programs from the government and influential companies / organizations;
- Impacts of market economy, specifically by working on: *a) Customary Laws & Natural Resource Management towards OD²², ID²³ & traditional civil society development; b) Eco – Farming & Young Indigenous Ethnic Leadership Development Strategy – YIELDS towards local governing improvement; and c) Community Based Ecological Enterprise towards Fair Economic Development.*

MECO-ECOTRA focuses on building up grassroots CBOs and CBIs in the Mekong region, it does this through promoting the organization of indigenous people into five thematic networks: 1) customary law in NRM and cultural Identity conservation; 2) eco-farming practices in daily livelihood security; 3) traditional herb knowledge – spirit – species in local community health care; 4) traditional wisdom of indigenous women in handicraft textile; 5) community-based ecological enterprise for local niche green and clean productions. Connecting elders and key farmers to the young generation by in the organizational structure of the five thematic networks is a key strategy and priority of MECO-ECOTRA.

The approach of working with the five thematic networks is based on the experience and lessons learned in previous key achievements when working with grassroots civil society from the period of 1994 up until now. Achievements and progress is in relation to a long term timeframe when working towards real empowerment of grassroots civil society.

II.1. Key achievements

Key achievements from 1994-2004

During 1994-2004, SPERI (TEW-CHESH-CIRD) addressed the basic right to livelihoods through multi-theme poverty reduction programs. SPERI successfully addressed civil rights land use issues especially in regard to indigenous women. This was achieved through lobbying to place the names of women equally with their husbands on Land Use Rights Certificates (LURCs). We achieved the ***recognition of 6,276 indigenous women's names in the LURCs through the Land Allocation Program.*** On a larger scale that addresses the rights-based

²¹ Democracy- achieved on a local scale, through the recognition and validation of traditional forms of organization and self management related to different cultural practices; including customary law in natural resource management, traditional ecological farming, herbal medicine, handicrafts and traditional education and knowledge.

²² OD = Organizational Development

²³ ID = Institutional Development

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approach to indigenous households or families, we have achieved *an allocation of 38,032 ha of forestland to 10.000 households.*

From 1994-2004 TEW-CHESH-CIRD successfully worked with a rights-based approach for many indigenous communities in the Mekong through applying our lobby-oriented strategies and the recognition of using cultural thread as the key to promote grassroots-based solutions.

“Sharing with Indigenous Minority People without Valuing their Cultural Identity, unaware of their Rights to Effective Participation in any Decision Making Processes would create double our Guilt we cause to these peoples and we would produce new forms of poverty” – SPERI

Key achievements from 2005-2009

Moving on from the period of 1994-2004, the key farmer network underwent reformation to focus on the five thematic networks. The period of 2005 – 2009 was a time of great activity within these networks involving people from minority groups: Hmong, Dao, Thai, Xinh Mun, Ma Lieng, Ma Coong, Giarai, Kho Mu, Lao Lum, Karen in Mekong watershed of Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. Official recognition²⁴ is a consequence of formal lobbying processes by the networks themselves. Working through MECO-ECOTRA the following has been achieved in each of the five thematic networks:

- 1) Customary law in natural resources management and cultural Identity conservation; Official acknowledgment of the legitimacy of community management; allowing for the exercise of rights and duties that relate to ownership of community land and forest management.
- 2) Eco-farming practices in daily livelihood security; Progress has been made in partnerships with State vocational schools (in the form of PPP²⁵). There has been improvement of state training methodology through promotion of teaching by learning, learning by doing, and student-centered approaches.
- 3) Traditional herb knowledge – spirit – species in local community health care; Youth have conducted TOT²⁶ courses; training local villagers in growing organic vegetables this has gained enormous support from the district and communal agriculture officials. Behavioral changes are accompanying a growing awareness of environmental and health issues associated with methods of industrial agriculture; i.e. the risks of pesticide, herbicide, insecticide and chemical use.
- 4) Traditional wisdom of indigenous women in handicraft textile; Grassroots community herbal associations have been blooming; about 20 associations are community-run in Vietnam and Laos. A total of 260 ha of herbal forest area has been recognized and protected. Traditional healers are gaining recognition and acceptance from local official health care systems and enjoy

²⁴ Official acknowledgement in these areas represents an important step forward for these communities as it represents a change of attitude in strict top down control, it represents a recognition of the value of self management and is an indicator of the success of the network in these areas. For example in Long Lan village, Luang prabung, Lao, people have been given the opportunity to practice traditional forms of community forest management that s officially recognized acknowledged and supported.

²⁵ Public private partnerships.

²⁶ TOT - Training of Trainer

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a wider scope of rights to practice herbal wisdom and knowledge with better access to herbal forest areas.

5) Community-based ecological enterprise for local niche green and clean productions; Handicraft groups at the community level are being recognized and acknowledged by local authorities. Women are gaining rights to access and manage areas of forest resources for handicraft products.

A particularly positive achievement is the foundation of the Mong association in Northern Laos. Membership has been growing to number 900 households, 10000 people in 25 villages and now Kho Mu and low lander groups have involvement as well. Mong elders are involved in conflict resolution activities acting as an advisory council and coordinators of community development. They are re-establishing traditional forms of management in the area such as the practice of the Nao Song ceremony as a way to make community decisions and set regulations. The increase in membership is an indicator that the organisation is meeting the needs of the people in their current situation and is a testament to the success of networking endeavours in the context of the Mekong.

(See detailed Matrix of MECO-ECOTRA's Stakeholders Analysis at attached documents)

II.2. Challenges of MECO-ECOTRA

General Challenges

1. CBOs and CBIs have not yet achieved a level of formal recognition at the level of national law and there has not been a Mekong regional agreement. There are issues of equity and transparency for local participation processes.
2. Local community initiatives in all MECO-ECOTRA thematic networks are diverse and must be strongly encouraged and supported. Support on a broader scale is often limited by the fact that bargaining power between local communities and corporations is greatly unbalanced. Corporations are interested in aggressively exploiting natural resources which is in stark contrast to local community initiatives.
3. Some pilots have addressed issues in community rights; and demonstrated the actual exercise of community rights. These pilots however are not yet strong enough to make political reforms over a broader scale in the formal system.

Challenges of Customary Law in Natural Resource Management:

- How to apply achievements of Customary Law Networking into lobbying for community rights to land?
- How to lobby Local Government and State Forest Enterprises to decentralize land use rights to individual households?
- How to analyze and document impacts and indicators from these practical pilots for lobbying and policy change purposes?
- How to coordinate traditional elders, key social activists, independent lawyers, anthropologists, and media at the local, national, and Mekong regional scales?

- How to link different practical pilots on Traditional Customary Laws in minority communities to inspire the young generation, influence the views and understanding of policy-implementers, policy-makers²⁷?

Challenges to the practice of Eco-Farming:

- How to maintain and promote eco farming in areas where governments, companies and media try to promote modernized and industrial agriculture.
- How to analyze and document impacts and indicators from eco-farm pilots for lobbying and policy change purposes?
- Local eco-farm products have been successfully produced and used by CBOs, nevertheless, forming and identifying small scale niche markets for these products, improving quality and gaining certification has not yet been supported in the larger context or understood by officials.
- Local knowledge and concepts written into the FFSs training curriculum are still in process of gaining stronger recognition by formal education systems and officials.

Challenges of Networking on Micro-enterprise and fair trade for green and ecological products at the local market:

- How to avoid negative impacts from mono cropping and cash-cropping.
- How to analyze advantages and disadvantages of the market-based agriculture and NTFPs²⁸?
- How to raise awareness of eco farming products and access niche markets through Ecological Trading and Eco-farming networks²⁹?

Challenges of Network action on Lobbying for Community Rights to Land; and Information Sharing in the Local Media:

- How to strengthen capacity of local practice on Networking, Shared Responsibility, and Decentralization?
- How to lobby Networking as a local practice to be a legitimate entity in the formal legal framework?
- How to increase awareness of Networking in the local, national, and Mekong regional media?
- How to lobby private enterprises and business sectors to invest in Networking and Membership Fees?

²⁷ See separate proposal: Customary law pilot and Watershed Management in Mekong region, June 2006.

²⁸ Non timber forests products.

²⁹ See action plan of Corporation between HEPA and Permaculture Research Institute of Australia <http://www.permaculture.org.au/index.php>

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III. The three themes of MECO-ECOTRA.

III.1. Transforming MECO-ECOTRA towards the three themes

As seen above there are many challenges that face the MECO-ECOTRA networks. A strategy for improving the approach of MECO-ECOTRA in response to these challenges and the needs that have been raised from the farmers themselves has been identified. The five networks will be adapted and transformed into the following three themes:

1) *Community Institution in Watershed Resources Management*; This is an overarching theme, appropriate community management of the forest can nurture traditional society as a whole and reaffirm its core values and provide necessities for daily life and practice of customary law.

2) *Eco-farming*; this theme represents a synthesis of the herbal, organic farming and handicraft networks. The skills and knowledge³⁰ in each of these networks interrelates and members of each network can benefit greatly through interacting with each other under the umbrella of one theme.

3) *Community based Eco-Enterprise*; Ecological trading was an original over arching theme of all networks. The new structure makes the theme clear with greater potentials³¹ for explicit Institutional development regarding it.

There is a strong interconnection between each theme. The choice of these three themes is based on the understanding that each can holistically support the other based on natural relationships that exist in traditional society. This structure really builds upon traditional forms of organization that are inherent in these communities and allows for the interconnected management of issues within each theme. Through this method of using themes to create community institution we can really support the development of civil society and democratic practices³². The three themes are a foundation to guide SPERI's changing organizational structure to adapt to the farmers' self-development context. All themes will be used for teaching and training indigenous youth at the FFSs.

³⁰ They can share knowledge skills in farming and harvesting; people can understand more deeply the activities of each other and can manage their situation better to build appropriate CBI. An experienced elder of the village might have a vast amount of knowledge on all of these networks.

³¹ Farmers in the herbal network and handicraft network were keen to share responsibilities in developing community-based eco-enterprises; both are able to make products that are well suited for their collaboration.

³² When officials acknowledge and recognize community based institutions that are based on themes that relate to peoples basic lives they are supporting a democratic process (this is a breakthrough in politically sensitive countries).

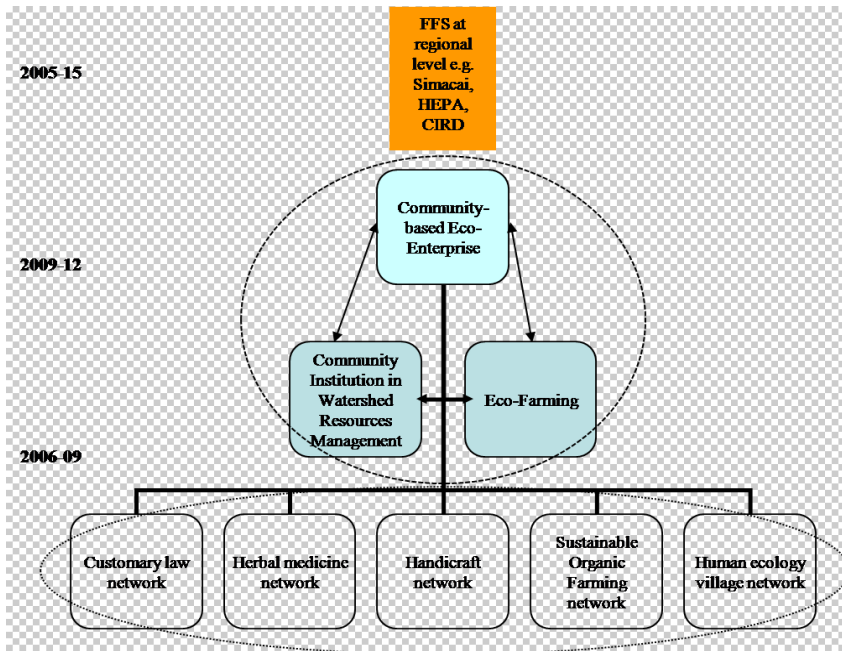


Figure 5: Transforming MECO-ECOTRA towards the three themes, farmers in the five networks as shown develop into higher levels of connection and organization of community institution within the three cross cutting themes, this will be the focus from 2009 – 12. FFS is a key feature in the development of MECO-ECOTRA and the three themes, and is a major strategy for the future.

Within each theme, sub-issues have been defined:

Table 1: MECO-ECOTRA's three themes and the sub topics pertaining to each (see: Annex 4).

	3 themes	sub issues
1	community institution in watershed resources management	1.1. community social norms/beliefs in protecting watershed resources; 1.2. community laws and regulations in using and preserving watershed resources; 1.3. community rights in managing watershed resources;
2	eco-farming	2.1. learning about spiritual ecology; 2.2. promoting adaptive local knowledge, and local solutions; 2.3. learning holistic eco-farm planning and design; 2.4. promoting the sustainable governing of eco-farm;
3	community based eco-enterprise	3.1. promoting an ethical, cultural, social and ecological local production chain with local branding; 3.2. promoting a spirit of active voluntary participation, community-orientation and transparency among members; 3.3. promoting the value of nurturing ecological values; 3.4. working towards fair share, fair distribution, local livelihood security and ecological return;

III.2. Farmers to transform into new positions and roles

As identified from farmers is the need to increase their capacity to transform into new positions and roles, through greater connectivity as teachers to Farmers Field Schools for example. Elders and key farmers in the five networks show a strong wish to pass down their skills and knowledge to the younger generation through the FFS training environment. They show great ability and potential in positions such as the following; on site-trainers for the youth, demonstration by use of their own farms, as action researchers (i.e. together with youth they can conduct community and topical studies), occasional lobbyists and supervisors for FFSs training sites (at household, community, and regional levels) (*see: annex 5*).

III.3. Promoting young indigenous human resources through FFSs

FFS is an English acronym for Farmers Field School³³. Since the end of August 2007, SPERI adopted Farmers Field School as the name applied to three sites; FFS-Simacai in Lao Cai district– North-West of Vietnam – border to Yunnan, China; FFS-HEPA in Ha Tinh province– border to central Laos; and FFS-Dong Le in Quang Binh province– Central Vietnam. These schools are a strategy to approach the grassroots farmers' movement and to promote eco-farming practices particularly among young indigenous groups. A main objective of the FFS eco-farm training program is to conduct farmer-training by focusing on field-based, hands-on experience and demonstration. The FFS strategy comes from the realization of the need to build capacity for young indigenous (i.e. YIELDS³⁴) to become future leaders of the current MECO-ECOTRA farmer networks (*see: annex 6&7*).

Up to now, FFSs have trained 81 indigenous students from 10 different indigenous groups in Laos and Vietnam. In the future, *FFSs will be expanding at three levels* - household,

³³ See more Global FFS network! SPERI has 5 staff members who join the global FFS email discussion forum.

³⁴ YIELDS: Young Indigenous Ethnic Leadership Development Strategies.

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community, and regional. The learning environment of the family household and community would suit indigenous youth well in relation to certain practical topics and applied studies. To connect in solidarity at the Mekong regional level, there is the potential of developing a community centered FFS in Luang Prabang province, Laos.

FFS at the three levels focus on building up youth leadership skills. Graduates from the FFS's will go back to their communities and play three roles: 1) providing training on land use planning towards eco-farming; 2) coordinating the young generation in relation to natural resource management and network action in managing impacts from exploitative companies; 3) improving and replacing negative local governing attitudes.

Expanding FFSs at all three levels simultaneously would help MEOECOTRA fast track the early stages of building up the capacity and numbers of young indigenous human resources to (1) take over responsibilities for the existing MECO-ECOTRA and (2) outsource for the prospective indigenous leadership at the local community level.

In short, the transformation of MECO-ECOTRA networks - working towards the three themes together with a youth-building focus through FFSs learning environment is an attempt to continue facilitating the alternative development option and empowerment of civil society at the grassroots level in the Mekong).

III.4. Connecting the three themes to FFSs

MECO-ECOTRA is working with a stronger focus on the three themes. Hence FFSs need to upgrade its teaching/learning environment and set up three training sections to assist the network at the regional level (figure 4). FFSs at household, community, and regional levels will provide opportunities and an environment for learning and exchange between farmers and youth.

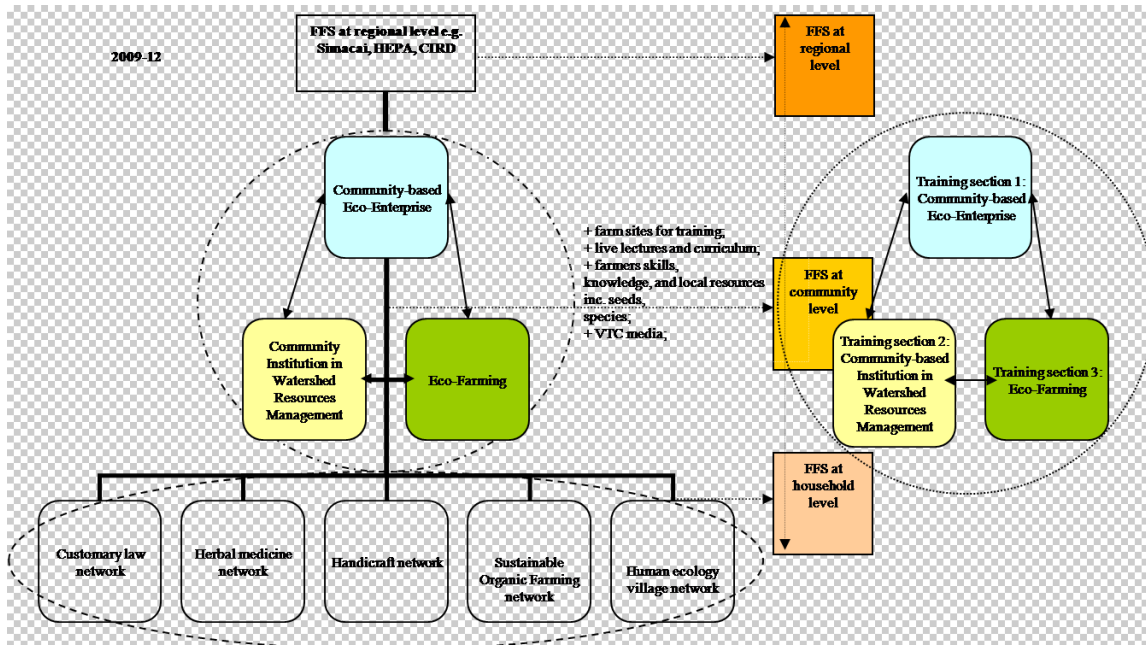


Figure 4: Linkages between the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA and FFSs, FFSs should exit at all levels, household, community and regional, the three themes are the basis of the FFS curriculum at all levels.

MECO-ECOTRA provides farmer-based teaching staff and teaching sites. In parallel, FFSs organize training for youth and promotes the ability to conceptualize and facilitate the three themes into community initiatives and new community development practices. FFSs will also build a good database system for curriculum building and recording, and writing up and developing community studies based on the three themes.

IV. Expected Outcomes and Activities - Jan 2010 to Dec 2013

- Outcome 1: To have stronger Mekong regional networks of the key community leaders in areas of community institution in watershed resource management, eco-farm pioneering practices, and community initiatives on eco-enterprises;
- Outcome 2: To have stronger Mekong regional legal recognition on Community Rights to Watershed Resources; and expansion of Community Institution in Forest Management;
- Outcome 3: To have a specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action to lobby for sustainable land use planning at the community level;
- Outcome 4: To have some Mekong regional pilot initiatives in community eco-enterprises towards ECOTRADING strategies;
- Outcome 5: To have stronger Mekong regional networks of capable and confident young indigenous;
- Outcome 6: To have stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse;
- Outcome 7: To have capable human resources for research, training, lobbying and media production.

Outcome 1: To have stronger Mekong regional networks of the key community leaders in areas of community institution in watershed resources management, eco-farming pioneering practices, and community initiatives on eco-enterprises;

Activity 1.1. *Through initiating Mekong regional speaking tour strategies:*

- 1.1.1. A speaking tour on three themes for six key community leaders from Thailand and Laos to Vietnam (incl. travelling, food, accommodation, other basic needs)
- 1.1.2. A speaking tour on themes for six key community leaders from Thailand and Vietnam to Lao (incl. travelling, food, accommodation, other basic needs)
- 1.1.3. A speaking tour on themes for six key community leaders from Lao and Vietnam to Thailand (incl. travelling, food, accommodation, other basic needs)

Activity 1.2. *Through initiating Mekong regional forum (MECO-ECOTRA FORUM) in corporation with VTC:*

- 1.2.1. Key community leaders to meet and exchange with authorities, researchers at the HCM political academy, high-level policy makers, and VTC media (in combination with outcome 6);
- 1.2.2. Key community leaders will become key speakers in one of VTC thematic discussions;
- 1.2.3. Producing and broadcasting twice per month media programs on VTC underlie program title: 'Community Entrepreneur' with key community leaders during 12 months per year.
- 1.2.4. Publication media programs on DVC for dissemination - public raising and fundraising;

Activity 1.3. *Through connection with ASEAN people's network:*

- 1.3.1. Networking of the current key community leaders with TEBTEBBA, AIPP, and IKAP;
- 1.3.2. MECO key community leaders are invited to International workshops to be speakers.
- 1.3.3. Three (3) key community leaders (one from Thailand, one from Lao and one from Vietnam) attend regularly ASEAN people's network forum each year (three time during three years) in Jakarta. This will take 7 days (incl. air return tickets, accommodation, food, and other basic needs).
- 1.3.4. Three staff to prepare and assist procedures, logistics and translate for key leaders to attend ASEAN people's network forum by local supporting organisations (e.g.: SPERI, RCSD, CHESH-Laos, etc);

Activity 1.4. *Through facilitating Mekong regional workshops and study tours;*

- 1.4.1. Organize 1 workshop per year for community leader exchange “making changes in the Mekong” toward lobbying promotion for the institutional aspect of community rights in watershed resource management; Study tour for community leaders in relationship to THEME 1 -> visiting good / average sites, learning how others are able to lobby for community rights!

1.4.2. Organize 1 workshop per year for young and old pioneers to exchange “practices and planning” towards building and improving eco-farms; Study tour for young and old pioneers in THEME 2 -> visiting good and average sites, learning how eco-farming has been promoted, what practices are being developed and what kind of incentives and benefits do eco-farms bring for the people.

1.4.3. Organize 1 workshop per year for village innovators / facilitators / promoters, exchange “steps and strategies” in promoting and practicing community based eco-enterprise; Study tour for village innovators in THEME 3 -> learning from sites that are well established or operating as community based eco-enterprises..

1.4.4. Organize 1 workshop per year for leaders in the three themes to meet up and exchange;

1.4.5. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (also 1.2)

Activity 1.5. *Through training courses run by key MECO-ECOTRA community leaders for their young indigenous at all three FFSs levels:*

1.5.1. Organize training courses in community institution in watershed resource management (by use of case studies/illustrations/real examples from MECO-ECOTRA farmers networks) -> identify, promote and search for examples in the Mekong region;

1.5.2. Organize training courses in eco-farming practices (by use of case studies/illustrations/real examples from MECO-ECOTRA) -> identify, promote and search for examples in the Mekong;

1.5.3. Organize study tours in community based eco-enterprise (by use of case studies/illustrations/real examples from MECO-ECOTRA) -> identify, promote and search for examples in the Mekong;

1.5.4. Key community leaders provide sharing/lectures for students at FFSs;

1.5.5. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (also 1.2).

Activity 1.6. *Through documentation (video clips, pictures, and curriculum); and outputs for VTC (also 1.2) which will disseminate for education and public raising;*

Outcome 2: To have stronger Mekong regional legal recognition on Community Rights to Watershed Resources; and expanding Community Institution in Forest Management;

Activity 2.1. *Through strengthening the 3 pilots on Community Rights to Watershed Resources and management;*

2.1.1. Strengthen the 3 pilots

- Pilot 1: the community right to ‘Nao Long’ spiritual forest of Hmong minority community in Simacai district, Lao Cai province, Vietnam;
- Pilot 2: the community right to ‘Special-use’ herbal forest of black Thai minority community in Que Phong district, Nghe An province, Vietnam;

- Pilot 3: the community right to ‘Highly protected’ watershed forest of Hmong minority community in Long Lan village, Luang Prabang district, Luang Prabang province, Laos PDR;
- 2.1.2. Action research (including papers, pictures, and VTC video documentaries) with key community leaders (outcome 1), document the above 3 pilots;
- 2.1.3. Presentation of findings in workshops at local and regional levels, inviting policy makers/academics;
- 2.1.4. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (also 1.2)

Activity 2.2. *Through expansion of the number of community forest areas (strengthen community institution in forest management)*

- 2.2.1. Support the organization of Spiritual Ceremonies on Community Forest management of the Hmong minority community across the Mekong region (Thailand, Lao and Vietnam);
- 2.2.2. Support the movement of black Thai minority in Que Phong district in expanding/strengthening community institution in forest management (Vietnam);
- 2.2.3. Support the organizational and institutional development and expansion of Hmong minority communities in the whole Luang Prabang district (10.000 participants) (and extend to Pac U, and Phon Xay districts), Luang Prabang province, (Laos);
- 2.2.4. Organize regional workshops (inc. Cambodia, Yunnan) with multiple social actors and stakeholders (CIRUM, CODE, VTC, authorities at different levels);
- 2.2.5. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (also 1.2).

Activity 2.3. *Launch a Community Forest Trust Fund to support local community initiatives;*

Outcome 3: To have a specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action to lobby for sustainable land use planning at the community level;

Activity 3.1. *In Viet Nam:*

- 3.1.1. Build capacity of farmers, provide practical training sites; and support farms in the early stages of development / transition in becoming eco-farms;
- 3.1.2. Organize workshops for farmers to update best practices, innovative practices, new trends; and exchange local species;
- 3.1.3. Increase networking with organizations who promote eco-farms and eco-community;
- 3.1.4. Raising public awareness on eco-farming practices through VTC;
- 3.1.5. Documentation in all forms for the database system at FFSs, for VTC for a future eco-farming center;
- 3.1.6. Set up an ecofarm center to contribute to the expansion of ecofarming where farmers are trainers and action researchers.
- 3.1.7. Launch an Eco-Farm Trust Fund to support local initiatives on eco-farming;

Activity 3.2. *In the Mekong regional level:*

- 3.2.1. Survey to find more pilots on eco-farm or potential eco-farms in the Mekong (e.g. Long Lan, Vang Vieng (Laos), ADDA, EcoLink, Ms. Binh-Quang Binh, NAPRO, herbal cooperative-Ba Vi);
- 3.2.2. Conduct study tours, onsite workshops, and create internship opportunities for farmers/youth;
- 3.2.3. Strengthen networks among eco-farm pilots to increase the eco-farm movement in the Mekong (e.g. Vang Vieng, Long Lan (Laos), HEPA (Vietnam), pun pun, elder Jorni, elder Yua (Thailand), Arie (Japan), Nari (Yunan, China); and possibly extending to PRI (Australia) and its network, LTO);
- 3.2.4. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (also 1.2)

Outcome 4: To have some regional Mekong pilot initiatives in community eco-enterprises towards ECOTRADING strategies;

- Activity 4.1.* Study community initiatives that are eco-enterprise-oriented (including potential community entrepreneurs) in the Mekong region -> details of sites or initiatives on eco enterprise;
- Activity 4.2.* Analyze different models to build the understanding of community based eco enterprise; and if possible create some relevant assessment criteria or indicators;
- Activity 4.3.* Improve any local initiatives at household and community levels on eco enterprises;
- Activity 4.4.* Support guidelines on quality eco-production chains and local branding;
- Activity 4.5.* Build capacity for community entrepreneurs and their enterprises;
- Activity 4.6.* Link these initiatives with the existing community enterprise models in the Mekong region (and also ISEA, CAFO) through regional workshops and study tours;
- Activity 4.7.* Documentation in all forms for the database system of future eco-enterprise center;
- Activity 4.8.* Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (see 1.2)

Outcome 5: To have a stronger Mekong regional network of capable and confident indigenous youth;

- Activity 5.1.* Provide training courses for youth to enhance their knowledge and skills through FFSs focused on the above 3 themes at community level;
- Activity 5.2.* Provide opportunities for youth to participate in cross-border exchanges, study tours and internships;
- Activity 5.3.* Build capacity for youth to assist key community leaders in documenting (pictures, video, and papers) and developing curriculum:
 - 5.3.1. Community institution in watershed resource management
 - 5.3.2. Eco-farming;
 - 5.3.3. Community based eco enterprises;
- Activity 5.4.* Upgrade database system and facilities for all FFSs;
- Activity 5.5.* Improve all practical learning sites, demonstration farms inside FFSs;
- Activity 5.6.* Support and follow up youth initiatives in:
 - 5.6.1. Establishment of their new farms [also 3.1.1];

5.6.2. Deliver TOT training and improve their skills to become teaching assistants;

5.6.3. Any initiatives in conducting community / special topic studies;

Activity 5.7. Launch Youth Initiatives Trust Fund to support youth innovative practices;

Activity 5.8. Share at MECO-ECOTRA forum (see 1.2)

Outcome 6: To have stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse;

Activity 6.1. *Through MECO-ECOTRA FORUM (see 1.2)*

6.1.1. See also 1.4.5; 1.5.4; 1.6.4; 2.1.4; 2.2.5; 3.1.8; 3.2.4; 4.8; 5.9;

6.1.2. For each thematic topic invite different social actors including key community leaders, concerned academics, NGOs, and policy makers to come and share their views in the MECO-ECOTRA forum;

Activity 6.2. *Through connection with concerned local and regional NGOs, academics, social activists, policy makers, business sectors, and socially responsible corporations;*

6.2.1. Conduct a series of seminars

6.2.2. Conduct a series of study tours

6.2.3. Through VTC

Activity 6.3. *Through publication strategies (website, book, and VTC media)*

6.3.1. See also 1.7; 2.1.2; 3.1.6; 4.7; 5.3;

6.3.2. Publish one book with a focus on cases of building civil society in the Mekong (aimed at policy analysis and lobbying: changes needed in amending civil society) together with Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy

6.3.3. Upgrade IT system for all offices; Hanoi, and at all FFSs

Activity 6.4. *Through organization of Mekong regional workshop*

6.4.1. Organize one Mekong regional workshop e.g. ‘dynamics of practical application/implications of civil society building in the Mekong’: present case studies;

V. SPERI - Social Policy Ecology Research Institute

V.1. Background

The grassroots development work that SPERI has been doing for the last 15 years has resulted in the establishment of key-farmer networks, which have consolidated into community based organizations (CBO’s). As a result of this development, the CBO’s are now step by step taking over the facilitating and coordinating role of SPERI.

In the coming 10 years, MECO-ECOTRA will become an independent network. The MECO-ECOTRA network will remain the most important partner to SPERI; however the network will undertake and self manage its own activities.

Since taking responsibilities from TEW-CESH-CIRD, SPERI has shifted focus to provide specific professional services for the whole region. It has continued its role of facilitation and support for MECO-ECOTRA within this milieu of activity,

SPERI will maintain and develop its capacity and strengths in research and lobbying, in order to support the approach of sustainable development, to influence policies on (inter-) national level and to contribute to the development of innovative models when working with ethnic minorities.

In the long term, research and lobby will be the pillars of the organization. However for the coming years, SPERI will also continue its focus on its important partnership role to the MECO-ECOTRA network.

V.2. Vision of SPERI

SPERI has learnt and believes that the indigenous peoples do the best work, engagement and have main responsibility to improve their quality of life and their environment.

SPERI sees itself as the facilitator providing opportunities to stimulate social justice, equity and dignity for poor people in mountainous and isolated rural areas, especially indigenous peoples, by strengthening livelihood strategies and contributing to democratization processes. Important values are: respect for cultural identity, gender equity, fair social economic values, balance between traditional livelihood strategies and market economy.

V.3.Mission of SPERI

SPERI strengthens the Mekong Community Networking and Ecological Trading (MECO – ECOTRA farmer network) to empower indigenous communities socially and economically.

SPERI's development research and lobby strengthens development activities and policies from non governmental organizations and government, thus scaling up experiences and approach of SPERI towards working with ethnic minorities and with civil society issues

V.4.Long term goal of SPERI

SPERI aims to become a professional research and lobby organization, able to support and represent the interests of its target communities, acting as a partner for the MECO-ECOTRA network, standing by its side. SPERI will offer professional consultancy services to CBO's and to other stakeholders.³⁵

Based on achievements from the last three years, SPERI will focus its transformation into three main skills

- Capacity skills in transforming Key Farmers Networks including:
 - Offering Care and Services to the larger Community via farmers, Farmer Field Schools at region wide, nationwide, and Mekong levels.

³⁵ Governmental or non-governmental development organizations.

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- Promoting Social ENTREPRENEURS Leadership and Networking Initiative skills.
- Facilitating and coordinating skills.
- Development of Research and Publications skills.
- Media, public awareness raising and advocacy skills
- Cooperation skills with independent Lobby and advocacy organizations, with Consultancy on Development – CODE³⁶ for example.

V.5. Key achievements from last three years

In late 2005, SPERI had the initiative in forming a concept of civil society in government and successfully contributed to the drafting of the Law on Association up until the 13th version. After these efforts the concept of civil society has been discussed more readily among key policy makers. The Government issued a decision to study the Civil Society theme further. Thus it became a topic of research at the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy and stirred the awareness of the larger Vietnamese population of the need to involve civil society groups in giving feedback and to analyze policy agenda.

In the ICCO consultation conference in Chiang Mai in November, 2006; Odile Ruijs shared a news that a hundred thousands hectare of forests land in Mondolkiri Cambodia was sold to BHP Billions for mineral exploration (the area of hundreds of thousands of minority people are living). SPERI took this initiative and to do a Brainstorming between Odile Ruijs, Kees de Ruiter, Roger Henk (ICCO coordinator in Cambodia), Christian Erni - IWGIA, and David Allian

After the consultation meeting, SPERI continued to brainstorm with Margreet (SPERI's lobby advisor), Douglas (an ex-BHP expert but volunteered in SPERI), and others in December 2006; and kept regular contacts with Mr. Roger Henk in Cambodia. In February 19-20, 2007, two SPERI seniors (Tuan and Margreet) flew to Phnom Penh together with Mr. Roger to do the 1st Round-Table Discussion; at this meeting, SPERI also share all covering cost to invite Mr. David to participate this Round – Table meeting. About 13 participants from concerned organizations were involved and discussing.

Outcome from this was opened up the 2nd Round-Table Discussion with 7 participants from concerned organizations to detail the action plan for the 6 countries in the Mekong region. and asked AIPP to help organizing, and calling for volunteer participation of members of the Steering Committee.

In September 27- 29, 2007, a GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION WORKSHOP ON EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES, AGRI-BUSINESS AND HYDRO POWER included **Burma, Thailand, Yunnan China, Cambodia, Lao, Vietnam** be organized under logistic organizing of AIPP See <http://mekongdmp.net/conference-program.htm>.

³⁶ See at Website: <http://codeinter.org/index.php?act=home>

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In March 12 – 13, 2007, SPERI raised another initiative on the concept of lobbying in the political context of Vietnam. SPERI in co- opened up a conference of “Lobbying – practice and legal framework”, which involved the vice president of the National Assembly and other members from the Standing Committee of the National Assembly, Legislative Committee of the National Assembly, business representatives - Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), provincial authorities, diplomatic senior officials, NGO leaders, social senior activists, National media, national and international scholars, representatives from The Netherlands lobby agency (BBO), LTO – Farmer Network of the Netherlands, Canadian independent lobbyist scholar and other stakeholders.³⁷ After the lobby conference, a guide - book for “lobbying - practice and legal framework” to be publication in Social Labor Public house

After the Lobby conference, DELOBBY³⁸ from SPERI had separated and developed into the Independent Consultancy on Development (CODE) as a professional lobby organization. CODE and SPERI are NGO alliances working towards protecting the rights of indigenous communities at the strategic regional level addressing cross-border issues; for example lobbying against large dam construction and bauxite mining in the Central Highlands of Vietnam in connection with Cambodia and Laos.³⁹ These two highlighted initiatives have opened up a wider legitimate social environment for SPERI to continue facilitating civil society building at the grassroots.

In December 2008, SPERI facilitated networking between MECO-ECOTRA and a national VTC program to reflect on and promote the whole process of grassroots CBO-CBI – civil society development under supervision of SPERI.⁴⁰

The most intensive activities from 2006-2009 were the foundation of five themes for key-farmers to become confident to decide their own objectives at the community level. They created among themselves different strategic priorities in response to the suffering and challenges they face in the MeKong region. (SPERI annual reports, 2006-2009).

In the last 3 years 2006-2009, significant attempts from MECO-ECOTRA and SPERI have been invested to organize farmers into the five thematic networks. To achieve this, SPERI is investing in building grassroots civil society by facilitating the development of legitimate social, educational, political, and media environment through the four Memorandums of Understanding⁴¹ signed and practiced.

1. **The MOU signed (in October 16th, 2007) between Lao Cai Bureau of Labor Invalids and Social Affairs, Lao Cai State-based Vocational Training School and SPERI on Educational Cooperation on Vocational Training Methodologies;**
2. **The MOU signed (in October 23rd, 2007) between Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy – Institute of Politics Area I and SPERI on conducting *Research Studies***

³⁷ see <http://lobby.speri.org/>

³⁸ DELOBBY: Department of lobby of SPERI

³⁹ See <http://mekongdmp.net>.

⁴⁰ See MOU below signed between SPERI and VTC in June, 2009.

⁴¹ See PDF 1, PDF 2, and PDF 3 attached.

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and application of research results into Human Resources Development and Policy-making process;

3. **The MOU signed (in June 17th, 2009) between the Digital Television VTC, Vietnam Multimedia Corporation and SPERI on Program Production and Broadcasting Cooperation;**
4. **The MOU signed (in October 29th, 2009) between RCSD/CEDS, PAFO'S CHESH-LAO & SPERI on research and training on watershed management based on customary laws.**

SPERI has provided interfaces at varied levels and in many forms for exchanges between MECO-ECOTRA communities and these social actors. SPERI's continuous progress in building the CBO⁴² or CBI⁴³ development indicators have and will be meeting up with MECO-ECOTRA farmers' continuous need of stronger participation and recognition of their role in the society.

V.6. Challenges of SPERI.

- How to upgrade development research, communication, and cooperation skills to work in the integrated global economy?
- How to develop professional lobby skills at local, national and international levels?
- How to become an Independent Coordinator in meetings involving politicians, academics, key farmers, media, international organizations, lawyers, and donors?
- How to deal with the transformation of Networking particularly at the Mekong regional scale?
- How to build the skills and capacity of our staff members to meet the professional needs of MECO-ECOTRA?
- How to promote youth to take over local governing initiative?
- How to stimulate Social Entrepreneurship⁴⁴ in the context of the current world economic development values?

V.7. Expected Achievements by 2012:

In 2012, SPERI needs to achieve seven (7) outcomes above of MECO-ECOTRA as be mentioned again as bellow:

Outcome 1: To have stronger Mekong regional networks of the key community leaders in areas of

⁴² CBOs indicators are as a process of self-improved capacity to (1) maintain the organizational value, direction, and structure; and also (2) capacity in dealing with internal and external forces/changes

⁴³ CBIs indicators are as the advanced capacity to (resilience in a sustainable way) and/or to make influences (positive improvement and/or changes to neighborhood communities (or at larger scale). This expansion in change-making could result in positive structural change at the larger system (system here refers to (a) governmental policy at the central government; (b) market at all levels (inc. local, regional, national, and international).

⁴⁴ Social entrepreneurship – to value community spirit in raising people's standard of living and quality of life and the strengths it gives to deal with outside influences. Respecting the role that traditional knowledge can have in benefiting the lives of the community over the acquisition of money.

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	community institution in watershed resource management, eco-farm pioneering practices, and community initiatives on eco-enterprises;
Outcome 2:	To have stronger Mekong regional legal recognition on Community Rights to Watershed Resources; and expansion of Community Institution in Forest Management;
Outcome 3:	To have a specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action to lobby for sustainable land use planning at the community level;
Outcome 4:	To have some Mekong regional pilot initiatives in community eco-enterprises towards ECOTRADING strategies;
Outcome 5:	To have stronger Mekong regional networks of capable and confident young indigenous;
Outcome 6:	To have stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse;
Outcome 7:	To have capable human resources for research, training, lobbying and media production.

Then, SPERI itself has to step up into higher knowledge, skill and methodology according the three above themes (*Community Institutions in watershed management, Eco-Farming for sustainable Land use planning, Community Enterprise for fair trading*) in order to facilitate and coordinate MECO-ECOTRA's regional network action and to move forwards to strategic challenges and needs of the poor in Mekong. It means that, SPERI by 2012, will be come:

1. A visible and well known **Independent** Social Policy Ecology Research Institute, and be able to contract with professional teaching and training program for above needs and concerns for Indigenous Minority society in Mekong region.
2. An Independent Civil Society Think Tank and confidently to influence the policy making and implementing process by different baseline case studies, research and practical pilots itself at household, community, intercommunity, regional, national and interregional;
3. An Independent Civil Society Foundation who can be able to develop its theory and sustainable community development towards poverty structural alleviation and rights based approaches;
4. An Independent Civil Society Agency who are confident to performance new way approach of "Programmatic Approach – Co-responsibility and Decentralization – PROCODE" for ICCO in Mekong region.

V.8. Expected outcomes and Activities of SPERI

To achieve above 6 expected outcomes of MECO-ECOTRA, so an expected outcome and activities of SPERI will be:

Outcome 1: To have an independent and professional organization (SPERI) with about 9 senior coordinators and experts and 10 junior staff. Indigenous students acting in a staff – internship role will be given the opportunity to share responsibility for MECO-ECOTRA and build up their capacity as a generation of future leaders. Students acting in this way will gain confidence in the institutional skills required to improve local governance in the areas of *Community Institutions*

in watershed management, Eco-Farming for sustainable Land use planning and Community Enterprise for fair trading.

Activity 1.1. *Coordination Skill Building* for *three (3) senior staff* according to “inter – cultural and political” *approaches, research and training methodology* in the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA in which at least one *(1) senior* staff in each theme will be responsible for coordination of activities, including:

- Diplomas, internships or short training courses for 3 senior staff in an organization that is and alliance of ICCO or in other partnership institutions or universities, for example: ISS – Holland or Conflict resolution and Peace building in Cambodia;
- Exchange and study tours with alliances of ICCO in Southeast Pacific and Mekong countries;
- Participation in non-degree programs in the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD) -Chiang Mai University, RECOFT Bangkok and other Training Institutes;

Activities 1.2. Building capacity for *3 senior staff* to be able to deal with *conflict over religion and peace building* to better facilitate network action in the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA:

- Internship, intensive training courses, diploma program with ICCO alliances;
- Master program equivalent or non-degree Master program for conflict resolution and peace building;

Activities 1.3. Training in curriculum building skills for *3 senior staff* to be able to update and create a sound and effective practical and theoretical curriculum in designing eco-farming systems. This will be achieved by making use of local knowledge and wisdom and based on an understanding of local solutions to the practical challenges of the three themes in different cultural and political contexts:

- Fund to providing advisors and teachers from Holland Farmer School, Global Farmer Field School;
- PhD program equivalent or non-degree PhD program for one SPERI senior staff to catch up the three themes’s theory;
- Internship or non-degree programs for indigenous students and junior staff that focus on research methodology and skills by carrying out research on specific topics regarding the three themes.

Activities 1.4. Building up specialized skills for 10 junior and indigenous students in:

- Need Assessment Study and Participatory Learning and Action with Elders, Key Farmers;
- Skills in case study research, recording stories, pictures and videos, communications;

Activities 1.5. Attending seminars / workshops / conferences on development issues relating to land, natural resources, and conflict over values and religions

Activities 1.6. Screening young indigenous and non-indigenous students/staff to follow up.

- Select young indigenous students who graduated from FFSs for further training on development work (e. g. four students from K1A in HEPA);
- Select young indigenous students who graduated from Vocational Schools or Universities and provide them opportunities to carry out field research with SPERI;
- Seek external human resources / international experts – volunteers who is interesting to work with SPERI to increase staff capacity in 1) English; 2) Research skills; 3) curriculum development. Prioritise for long-term international staff; (e.g. SPERI apply for volunteer from PSO – ICCO; AYAD and VIDA – Australia)
- Seek short-term experts to work for/with SPERI to increase staff capacity in the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA.
- Revise and adapt the structure⁴⁵ of SPERI to harmonize with the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA.

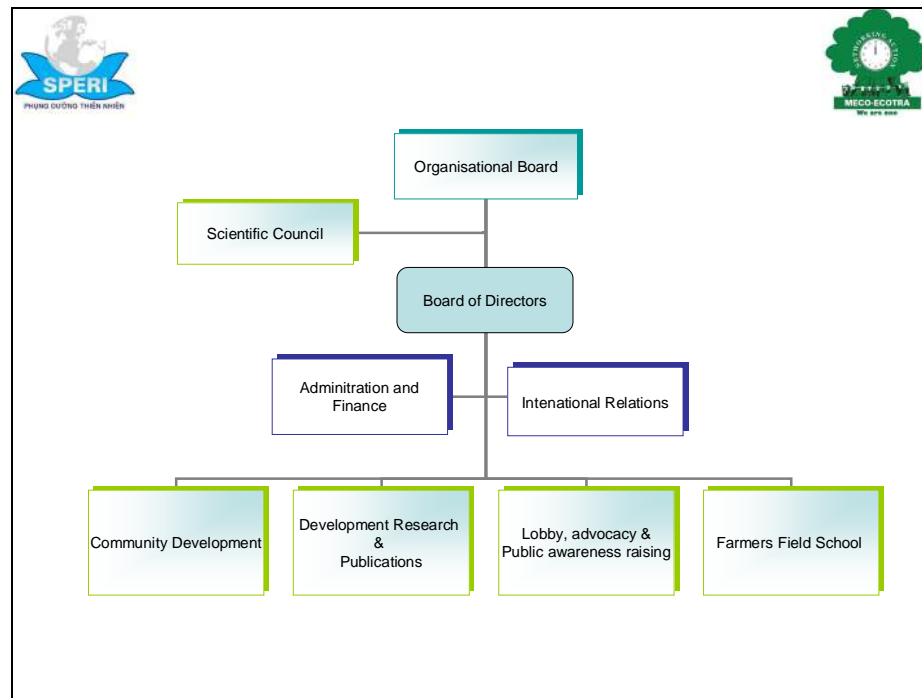


Figure 5: SPERI structure will be revised and adapted in order to harmonize with the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA.

⁴⁵ See annex 8 for old organizational structure and see annex 9 for of each department.

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VI. Expectations of SPERI for the Role of Donors

- Direct funds and resources to the CBOs network. Local NGOs could play the role of ‘back’ transformers if the legal frame has not yet ready authorized.
- Stimulate the small fund resources, through objective proposals, to facilitate creative Social Entrepreneurship Leaders initiatives from CBOs. Funds for policy analysis and lobby for changes, media and publication in order to building up Civil Society Library in Mekong region;
- Use funds to provide professional and stable marketing, coordinating, and managing experts to facilitate MECO-ECOTRA’s network action;
- Prioritize fund resources for Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) to provide basic facilities and conditions for young farmer generations in order to promote younger civil society generation for lobby;
- Working with new target groups e.g. independent media, parliamentary members, and private enterprise activists who focus on building stronger younger civil society.
- Informing and bridging about other networks and organizations under funded by ICCO, so that SPERI and MECO-ECOTRA can learn from and enriching larger scale;
- Advise on experts and consultants for capacity building.

VII. Beneficiaries

Direct Beneficiaries:

- Over 150.000 members of over 12000 households of MECO-ECOTRA⁴⁶ will be continued to strengthen their skills and knowledge in order to consolidate Network Action to be more confident to cope with their own future in the area of enriching their own customary laws in natural resource management for their own identity and inter – generation;
- Nearly 1000 households with over 10.000 people of the Mong association and 25 villages in Luang Prabang will joined the Network Action so far and together to built stronger across Mekong traditional civil society to deal with their own values;
- Neighboring communities⁴⁷ of MECO-ECOTRA will be gained and interacted in order to socializing local knowledge to deal with their new challenges;
- Researchers and Teachers from Vocational Technical School of Lao Cai province of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy of Vietnam, Phan Chu Trinh University of Vietnam, Suphanouvoong University of Northern Lao PDR will be gained on how MECO-ECOTRA to organizing and coordinating their own solutions in order to participate in to local natural recourse’s decision making processes;

⁴⁶ Vietnam: Lao cai province, Son la province, Lai chau province, Ha tay province, Nghe an, Ha tinh, Quang binh, Daklac province. In Lao: Luang Prabang province, Bolykhamxay province

⁴⁷ In Vietnam: Hoa binh, Lang son, Thua thien, Quang tri who are under different NGOs such CRD, CIRUM, RDSC...visiting, exchanging and learning from MECO-ECOTRA

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- Authorities of Lao Cai, Son la, Lai Chau, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Lang son, Hoa binh province who are directly involved in network action will be learned from the bottom up participation in land use planning and community forestry management initiative;
- Policy-makers in central government who are involved in field visits to pilots (Long Lan, Hanh Dich, Simacai, HEPA) will be aware about how MECO-ECOTRA dealing with democratization via bottom up participation approaches;
- VTC, producing programs based on “community ENTREPRENEURS”.
- Students and staff at FFSs, the communities of the students in and outside Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

Indirect Beneficiaries:

- Students at Universities, via transfer of experiences and lessons learned from teachers who participated in site visits, workshops etc.
- Areas connected to local governments that are starting to embrace to concept of community resource management.
- General public, through raising public awareness through TV programs, there is the potential of small changes from within society at large, raising consciousness in order to co-create a more healthy environment and social situation for all concerned.
- Those affected by recourse exploitation, through lobbying for policy change the lives of those who would otherwise be disrupted by resource exploitation can continue in peace.

VIII. Planning, monitoring, and evaluation

Planning; Yearly participatory planning together with MECOECTRA with a review every six months.

Internal monitoring and evaluation:

- Three month monitoring and evaluation of the activities in the field; carried out by staff and coordinators and regional farmer groups; to revise activities for the coming period.
- Yearly; internal participatory monitoring and evaluation, carried out by key farmers from MECO-ECOTRA and senior staff from SPERI. To adapt to the new needs and challenges of the local people.

Independent evaluation, at the end of the three year program, we invite an independent expert team to carry out the evaluation from the three year program.

IX. Summary Budget from January 2010 to December 2012

Vietcombank Rate of Exchange on 7 December 2009: 1EUR = 27.534,71 VND

No.	Activities	Units	Detailed budget (VND/EURO)					
			July 2009 to June 2010		July 2010 to June 2011		July 2011 to June 2012	
			VND	EUR	VND	EUR	VND	EUR
1	To have stronger Mekong regional network of the key community leaders in areas of community institution in watershed resources management, eco-farming pioneering practices, and community initiatives on eco-enterprises;	Subtotal item 1	1.195.000.000	43.400	1.195.000.000	43.400	1.195.000.000	43.400
2	To have stronger Mekong regional legal recognition on Community Rights to Watershed Resources; and expanding Community Institution in Forest Management;	Subtotal item 2	712.500.000	25.876	250.000.000	9.079	512.500.000	18.613
3	To have a specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action to lobby for sustainable land use planning at the community level;	Subtotal item 3	105.000.000	3.813	195.000.000	7.082	195.000.000	7.082
4	To have some Mekong regional pilot initiatives in community	Subtotal item 4	280.000.000	10.169	280.000.000	10.169	280.000.000	10.169

No.	Activities	Units	Detailed budget (VND/EURO)						
			July 2009 to June 2010		July 2010 to June 2011		July 2011 to June 2012		
			VND	EUR	VND	EUR	VND	EUR	
	eco-enterprises towards ECOTRADING strategies;								
5	To have stronger Mekong regional network of capable and confident young indigenous;	Subtotal item 5	1.235.000.000	44.852	635.000.000	23.062	1.235.000.000	44.852	
6	To have stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse;	Subtotal item 6	492.000.000	17.868	1.167.000.000	42.383	492.000.000	17.868	
7	To have capable human resources on research and training, lobby, and media to meet three themes of MECO-ECOTRA	Subtotal 7	1.420.000.000	51.571	1.320.000.000	47.939	1.320.000.000	47.939	
8	Strengthen working capacity of SPERI office	Subtotal item 9	150.000.000	5.448	150.000.000	5.448	300.000.000	10.895	
9	Overhead costs	Subtotal item 10	620.800.000	22.546	620.800.000	22.546	620.800.000	22.546	
10	Personnel	Subtotal item 11	2.830.000.000	102.779	2.830.000.000	102.779	2.830.000.000	102.779	
	Sub total		9.040.300.000	328.324	8.642.800.000	313.887	8.980.300.000	326.145	
11	Unforeseen (5%)	Subtotal item 14	452.015.000	16.416	432.140.000	15.694	449.015.000	16.307	
	Grant Total		9.492.315.000	344.740	9.074.940.000	329.582	9.429.315.000	342.452	
						Total 3 years	27.996.570.000	1.016.774	

Annex 1: Development – Localization or Globalization

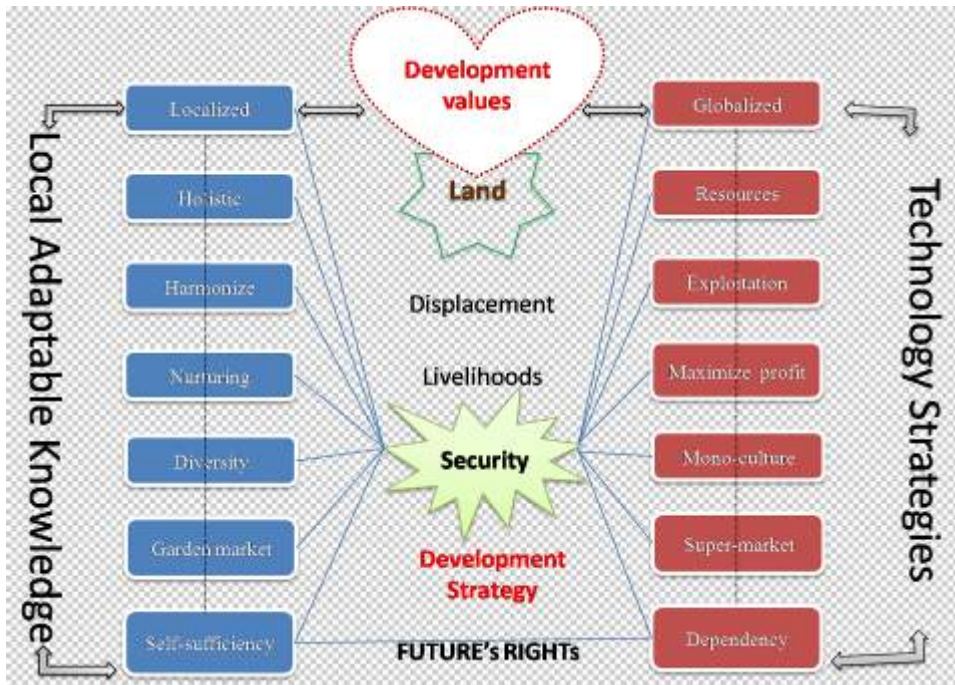


Figure 11: Analyze development choices: localization or globalization (SPERL, 2008)

Annex 2: Civil society, the river flowing.

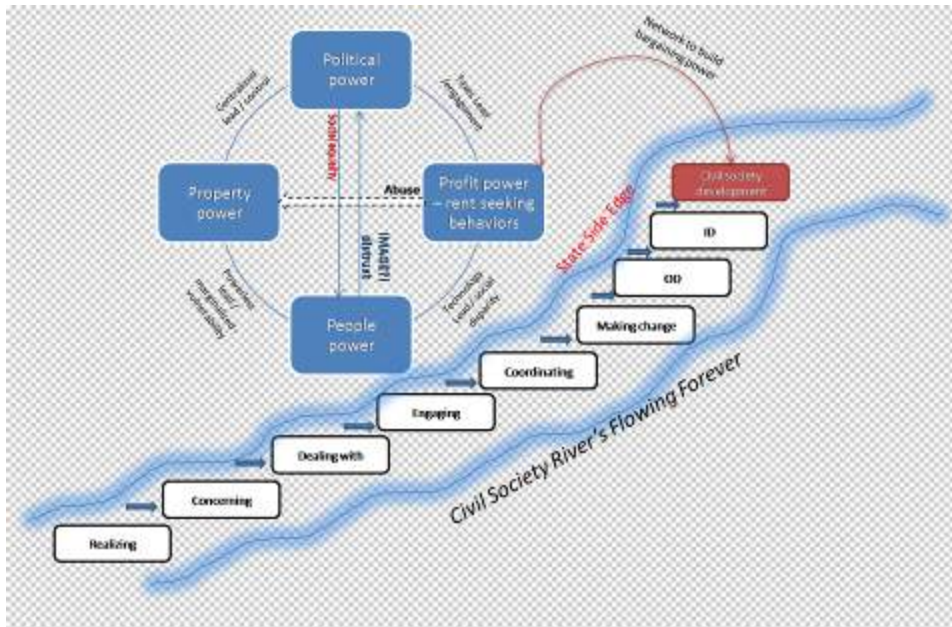


Figure 12: Building civil society in relation to power/empowerment (SPERI, 2008)

Annex 3: Concept of the Key Farmers

The concept of a key farmers' club occurred in the 1990s. Key farmers have a good understanding of their social relations inside and outside their community. They have a critical and creative mind and a long term development view. They are willing to get involved in social entrepreneurship and are willing to try new things. They are voted by the community with trust as they represent the community's concerns. They understand problems, causes, and consequences of their community problems. Key farmers are the key actors to act and dialogue with local formal systems. By using their community values and spirit and shared responsibility, hand-in-hand with traditional social political structure they inspire and lobby the formal system for the recognition of their identity and revival of traditional structure.

An environment for a healthy civil society is developed when voices of different social groups are represented and each group is accountable with their political social economic behaviors. **Networking** helps key farmers to recognize rights and responsibilities in the policy making and implementing processes. Networking strengthens the power from the below. It minimizes the centralized power and top down policy implementation. It encourages freedom for the marginal to participate, promotes the transparent institution, brings about better social equity, and that contributing to the democratization process.

History of networking: key farmer networks from 1994-2005

After studying the interrelationship between Dao women and their local knowledge⁴⁸ on herbal medicinal plants, an idea of networking these Dao women was initiated. These women come together, share knowledge on using herbal medicine, and brainstorm among themselves as an interest group. Their group has developed and expanded across different scales. The integrity between Dao identity and diversity of their knowledge on using herbs has enhanced their cultural value and knowledge on this resource.

Dao women and other minorities continued to open up to other interests such as preservation of handicraft textile, local knowledge in sustainable slope-land farming, and traditional regulations on land use and forest protection. Dao women and Mong women in Sa Pa district, and also black Thai women in Son La province together formulated the inter-cultural handicraft group. They maintain each cultural identity in using natural material to produce traditional textile products. In their group-working, they share among themselves knowledge and experience⁴⁹. The Dao community networking became a live-forum for different ethnic minorities to come and exchange. The forum gets involved in inter-generational, inter-identity, and inter-traditional structure participation⁵⁰.

The Sinh Mun⁵¹, Mong, Thai, Dao, Kho Mu, and La Hu women in northern Vietnam⁵² formulated different interest groups e.g. herbal medicinal plant, handicraft textile, savings and credits, land use planning, community based forest management in the watershed. These women were empowered and become more confident to decide a fairer exchange of their products in the local market e.g. soybean, tofu, handicrafts, and local corn species. They also successfully built ecological village through integrating traditional mode of production, communal consensus in decision making and strong lobby in recognizing forest land use rights for households and community. These women were officially recognized as co-owners in the forest land use rights certificates⁵³.

Associated with Gia Rai, E De, Mo Nong, Kho Me, Cham, Ba Na minorities in central highlands and southwestern provinces, networking has expanded to poor Kinh majority in central Vietnam. The network links to Mong, Kho Mu, and Laos in Lao PDR; Macanho, Dao, Mong, Thai, and Karen minorities in northeastern Thailand. The capable key farmers coordinate to help the poorer households in the network. Some of them have been selected to become

⁴⁸ Referred to the PhD study of Madame Tran Thi Lanh – Founder of TEW-CHESH-CIRD.

⁴⁹ The Ba Vi case study became an applied Pilot Research on Preservation of Traditional Social-Economic and Political Civil Rights but yet has been intervened by the Conservation Policy under the centralized government power i.e Establishment of National Parks maps out the Dao indigenous people.

⁵⁰ Referred to Elders i.e. Traditional Leaders, Young Generations, NGOs, independent scholars from Australia, U.S, Thailand, and France; UNESCO and CBOs coming from other countries. They came to learn local knowledge, lobbying approach, and how to get back Dao political civil rights. Since 1990, the Dao networking has received Thai, Mong, Sinh Mun, Kho Mu, Ma Lieng, Ruc, Khua, Sach, Gia Rai, E De, Mo Nong, Laos, and Thai minorities, and also ethnic Kinh majority.

⁵¹ An extremely vulnerable ethnic minority living in the northwestern Vietnam.

⁵² In Ha Tay, Lao Cai, Lai Chau, and Son La provinces.

⁵³ From 1994 to 2000, TEW lobby successfully the women's right in the forest land right certificates. The Law on Land in 2003 recognized officially in its articles.

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formal local officials. Key farmers' networking is now seen as one of the strategic focuses in the formal development frame.

8,000 women are the co-owners of forestland use right; 3,000 members of the key farmer network are confident and active farmers, participating in several community development activities; and 25 women have become government officials at the local level. Networking methodology addresses the needs and concerns of key farmers in different regions who desire to learn more and it stimulates new initiatives and creative work.

Annex 4: the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA

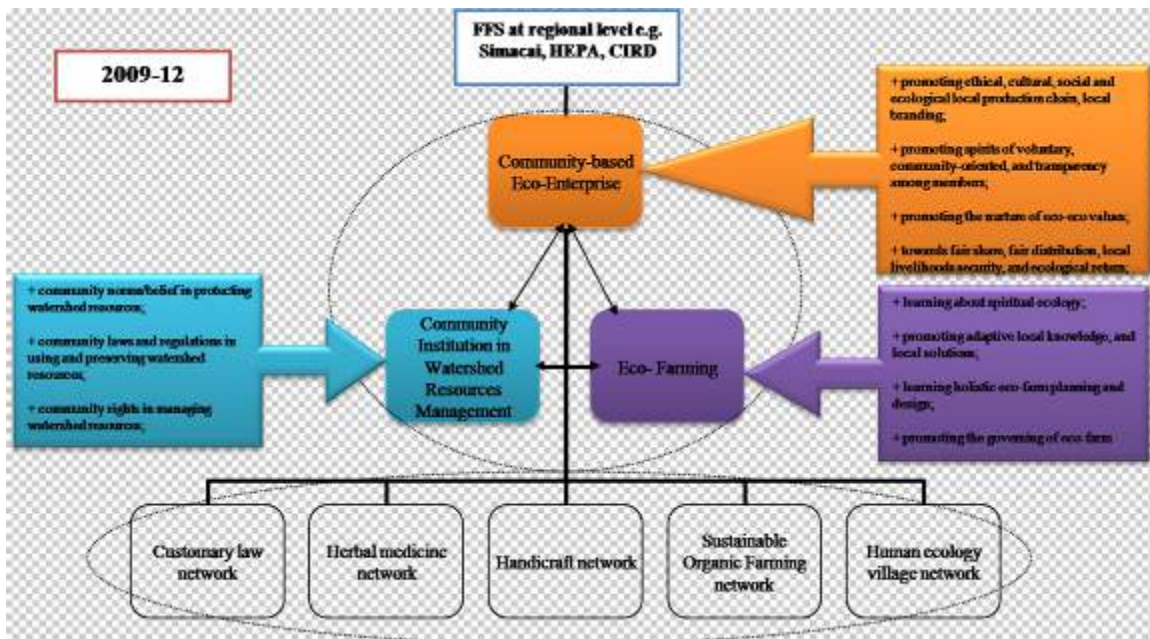


Figure 10: the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA, The three themes; Eco farming, community based Eco-Enterprise and Community Institution in Watershed Resources Management with there associated objectives will develop from the five networks. FFS is a strategic method at the regional level that is interdependent with the three themes.

Annex 5: Promoting young indigenous through the FFSs environment

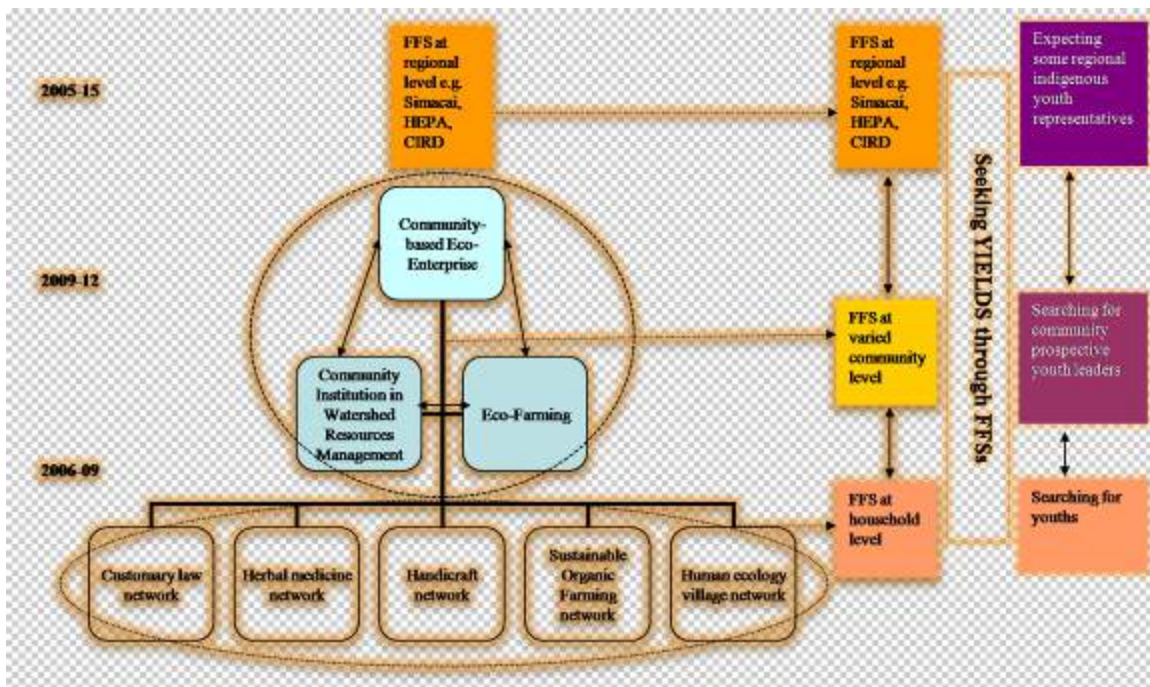


Figure 9: Promoting young indigenous through the FFSs environment, youth are sought at the household level and further established as leaders through the FFS to become regional representatives.

Annex 6: Farmers transform into new positions and roles in connection to the FFSs

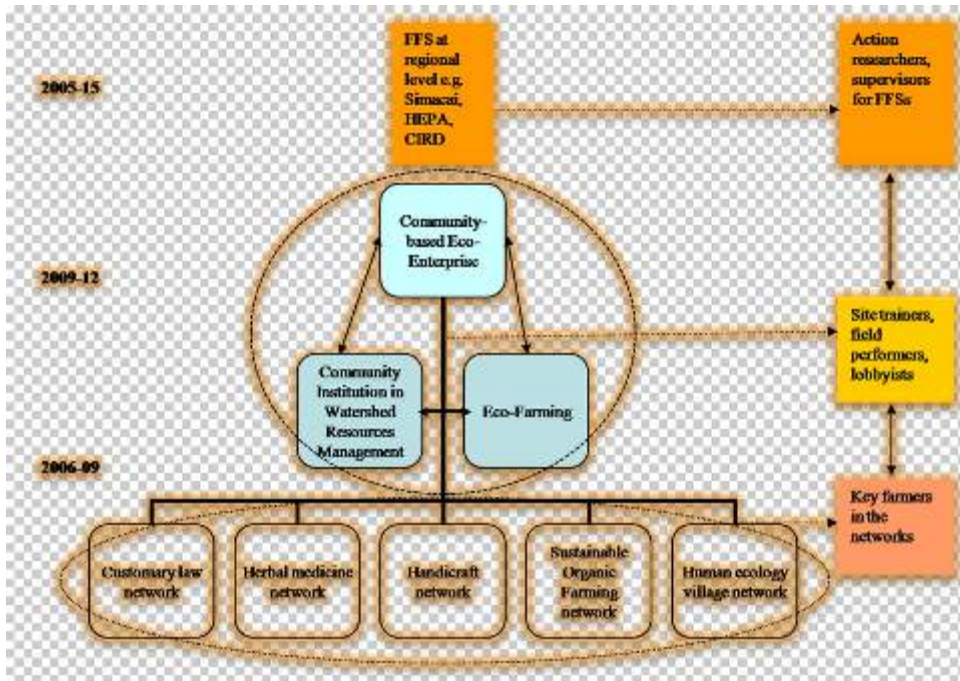


Figure 8: Farmers transform into new positions and roles in connection to the FFSs, Key farmers from the five networks that are shifting into the community institution of the three themes will have the opportunity to increase their capacity for the new positions as seen on the right of the figure.

Annex 7: Integrating the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA into the FFSs training program

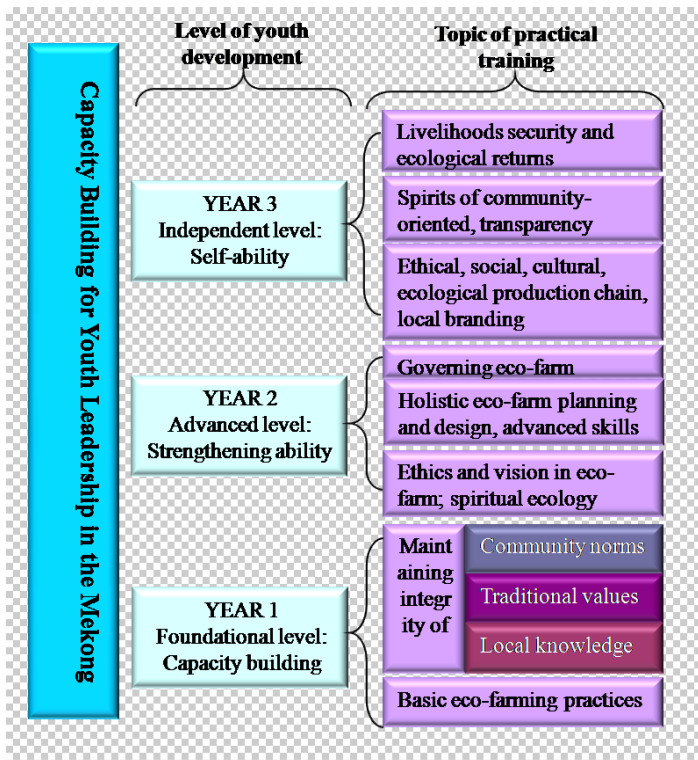
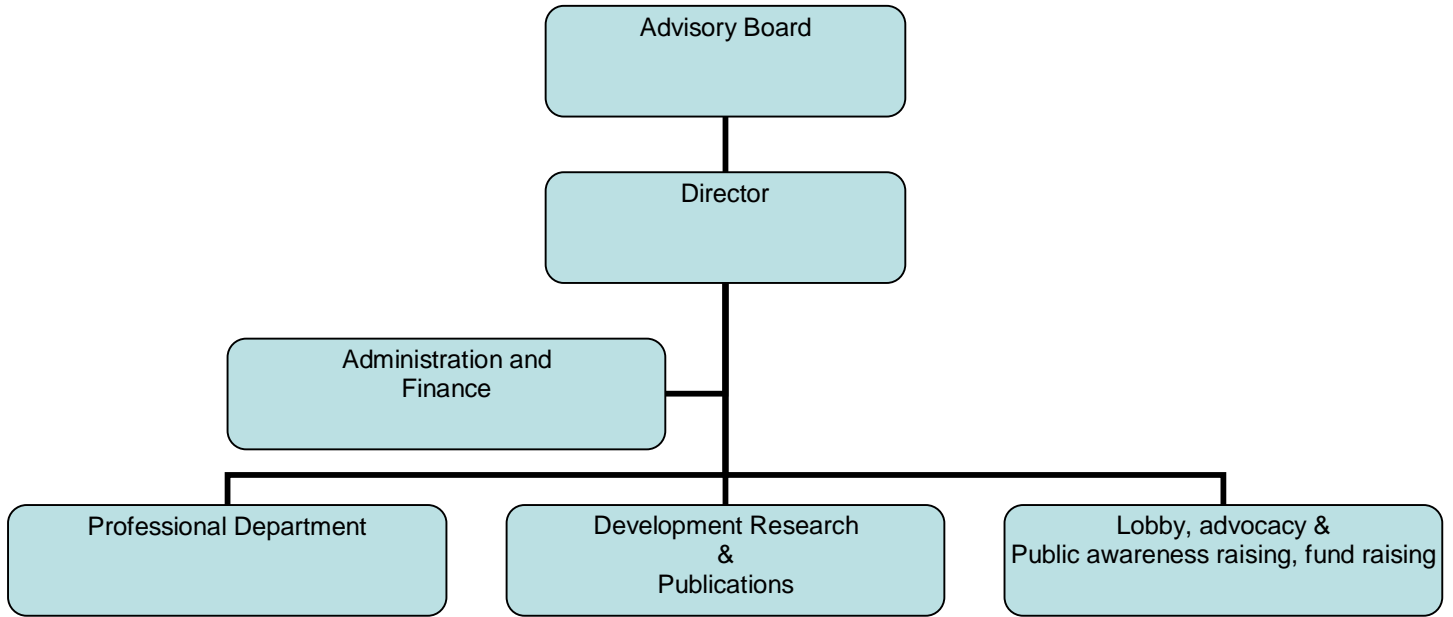


Figure 7: Integrating the three themes of MECO-ECOTRA into the FFSs training program, a focused three year curriculum aims at capacity building for youth leadership in the Mekong.

Annex 8: Organisational Structure from 2006-2009



Annex 9: Descriptions of Departments of SPERI

Community Development Department

The Professional department includes:

- i. Legal assistant: Land rights-land use, customary laws, patent protection, trademark registration, commercial laws.
- ii. Natural resource management: human ecology, nature and forest protection, natural resource management.
- iii. Technical assistant: Organic farming-animal husbandry-gardening-landscaping-construction.
- iv. Health care: Herbal medicine-hygiene-herbal forest gardens.
- v. Educational: Training and vocational schools and farmers' field schools.
- vi. Marketing: Product development-quality control-micro-enterprises-community based tourism.

When lacking expertise, SPERI, will outsource tasks and cooperate with other institutes, organizations or universities and industry.

Research and publications

Research will strengthen development activities; supporting raising of awareness and lobbying activities implemented both by SPERI and CBI's. In research we will draw heavily on results and achievements from the field, at the grassroots level, focusing on development issues and collecting CBO information and local know-how and innovations in a user friendly database. The departments and research coordinators will use collected data for publications and use these to support awareness raising and lobbying. Activities undertaken over the years will be analyzed and contribute to innovative models in collaborating with poor marginalized groups and minority communities. Publications will improve visibility and recognition of SPERI and its achievements. The research group will cooperate with outside institutions, universities or academics to conduct some of the research work. Other research will be conducted by internal staff.

Research has the following objectives:

- Improving knowledge and understanding of development issues
- Providing data and publications for lobby and promotional purposes
- Providing practical data and results for implementation of field programs

The organization will develop case studies on issues like community forestry and land decentralization and eco-farming practices. These will be published on a website, in newspapers, Multimedia (VTC), in reports, and presented during lectures and congresses, and result in books and film for promotional purposes.

Data and information will be collected that relates to the activities of the different thematic networks, like research on medicinal plants, anthropological research on minority culture and traditions, research on handicraft designs.

The research and publications group will link its activities to universities and academic institutes and develop research projects together.

The Research and Publications group will need one or two full time coordinators, who will also be responsible for quality control, lay-out and the timely availability of data, updating the website and contacting journalists and Media. They will give training to staff members on data collection, analysis skills and writing/publication skills.

Lobby-advocacy

In order to expand SPERI lesson learned from development work, we understand that those lessons need to influence policy-making processes. Government agencies now lack connection to the grassroots of society. The needs and problems at this level must be understood to guide decisions on policy directions that will (in) directly influence the lives of these communities. Raising public and government awareness on the needs and interests of poor and ethnic minority communities and their development is crucial in safeguarding future support for NGO and CBO's by government and international organizations alike.

The Lobby and Advocacy department of SPERI had separated and developed into the Independent Consultancy on Development (CODE) as a professional lobby organization. SPERI and CODE will work closely together on lobby activities which will focus on two main topics:

- Civil Society issues: lobbying policymakers in creating a legal framework for grass roots organizations.
- Needs and concerns directly linked to grassroots level: e.g. land-decentralization, customary law, community forests.

For lobby and advocacy activities we need strong, skillful, experienced and trustworthy staff, committed national and international partners and the power of representing a critical mass of people through networking.

Public Awareness Raising

A Media group in SPERI will focus on raising public awareness and Public relations. Responsibilities will include:

- Cooperating with the Vietnam Multimedia Corporation (VTC) to produce programs and broadcast twice a month. The cooperation MOU has been signed between VTC and SPERI on June 17th, 2009.
- Responsible for Public relations: SPERI will inform its networks, partners, resource persons of its philosophy -goals – strategies – projects – structure of the organization. SPERI will be informed of activities by other members in its networks, partners and resource persons / contacts.

- Cooperating closely with other forms of media to raise public awareness relating to development issues of indigenous peoples.

Farmer Field School

This department will focus on a number of responsibilities that relate to maintaining and extending the farmer field school network, these include;

- Coordinating elders who will act as the principle trainers for the FFSs.
- Facilitating FFS networking and affairs related to the practical learning and training environment at household, community and regional levels. Organisation of different practical topics into the appropriate level.
- Facilitate and organise the requirements for suitable outside experts such as the professors and volunteers who will come and provide lectures/trainings on various topics with students.
- Search for more pilots and lessons learned of different farmers in the region and beyond and connect to those who work with similar principles.
- Responsible for research and development of the training framework and curriculum at the FFSs themselves and in relationship to case studies and lessons learned in different bioregions and communities.
- Involve in cooperation with the research department, in trails, demonstration and pilots at the regional farmer field school sites and at house hold and community levels. Coordinate with the research department in providing the daily inputs of dairy information and data in the form of text, video and photos.
- Work with and facilitate the network of youth who will take over, step by step from the elders.

Administration and finance

1. Administration department

Responsible for:

- Reception and incoming phone calls and enquiries.
- Human resource management.
- Logistic support, including transportation, ticketing, hotel reservations, schedules, planning.

- Information sharing and exchange between the different departments. The communication system will be upgraded to make these exchanges flow smoothly.
- Library system: update all documentation on practical information and lessons learned. This will be a useful source of materials for staff and others who are interested in development work with indigenous peoples.

2. Finance department

Responsible for

- Financial administration
- Yearly financial audit,
- Accounting,
- Salary payments.

A decent working structure should be designed, and communicated to all other departments in the NGO, so that all staff can follow the same bookkeeping system.

Personnel

SPERI has a total of 30 fulltime staff and 10 learner staff of whom:

Five are working in the Hanoi office (head quarter office) in administration and financial management.

The others are mainly working in field sites in Lao Cai, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh provinces and Laos and linking between different areas.

SPERI tries to create and provide opportunities as much as possible for young staff / students⁵⁴ to learn how to work and study with indigenous peoples; to practice designing and working in farming systems, community forest management, practice in plant nursery, animal husbandry and veterinary, herbal medicine, etc. Over time staff are encouraged to follow their interest and become more specialized in specific themes.

SPERI has retained close relationships with other external experts and part-time staff who provide their consultancy on different issues./.

⁵⁴ Students from the University conducting field research for their final year.

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Get common understanding about MECO-ECOTRA concerning to “STRONGER” key community leaders in the three cross cutting themes”: 1) Community Based Institution in Watershed Management Network; 2) Eco-Farming Action Network and; 3) Community Ecological Enterprise” between ICCO regional country program officer and MECO-ECOTRA/SPERI 2010 -2012 (July 4th, 2010)

Dear Mr Le Hien and Mr Henk Bakker,

Thank you for your interesting questions of the 7 outcomes with regards to clarify the MECO-ECOTRA 2010 – 2012. Herewith, we would like to justify the 7 outcomes and hopefully you will find more convenient for exploring the document; However, the term of STRONGER, the phrase of words at the end of the overall discussing, and, the term of civil society discourse in this program context would be clarified next sentences:

1. “STRONGER” – and to what extent MECO-ECOTRA and SPERI going to broaden?!

Essentially and realistically at all over of the 7 outcomes of 2010-2012, which MECO-ECOTRA must to deal with in order to capture with “STRONGER” capacity, skills, and so on, as such as your wonder in the whole email, herewith we would like to address in very short reason why: “The mushrooming multinational companies in Mekong Highlands with excellent supported from different state policies such industrialization and modernization as quick as possible”, MECO-ECOTRA’s Key community leaders have been facing and confronting with big complex challenges due to displacing livelihood, losing land and forest for daily practices and even customary spaces, conflict over their traditional home land for food security economically, culturally and socially needs, and, more than whoever, they need for strengthening and up-grading their skills, experiences and knowledges, especially their capacity in negotiation and debate analytically and inspiringly towards the new challenging contexts at higher policies levels. That is why the program needs and must to rank up all different capacities and experiences of the key farmers, elders and youngs in order to coping with their new complex suffered. Being STRONGER, sooner or later they empowered their own CBOs and CBIs in order to broadening horizontally and influencing vertically policy making processes.

2. The Phrase of your wonders and comments about the **“outcomes directly focus on capacity of MECO-ECOTRA instead of solving problems raised in the proposal such top down policies making mechanism, land ownership, exploitation of natural resources, lot of identity and traditional values or value crisis”**.

As such as MECO-ECOTRA and SPERI believe that, the stronger civil society is sooner or later will contribute into improving the topdown policies problems and; making forwards to bottom up participation in order to offer a better understanding both government and society and, the ways of MECO-ECOTRA has been broadening and enriching such explained at paragraphs and sentences; basically enhancing society in order to achieve their aims in public transparent of any decision making processes. Finally, grassroot society will become confidently to cope with such **“topdown policies making mechanism, land ownership, exploitation of natural resources, lot of identity and traditional values or value crisis”**, and so on. That is why, SPERI focus direct to strengthen bottom community institution and practices such analysis.

3. *What and how civil society has been argued in the context of Mekong region?!*

The MECO-ECOTRA and SPERI value the Civil Society is expected to be willfulness, consciousness and sharing⁵⁵ social – culturally and politically correct instead of confronting and trouble making to governments.

Finally we would like to address the fundamental inter – dependent with each other between the 7 outcomes due to MECO-ECOTRA missions in poverty approaching and sustainable community dealing in order to clarify various questions of the outcome 1.2.3.4.5.6 which reference to footnote and please take a glance of scanning for a link;

The bellow of each outcome, we follow your terms of clarification with **RED underline and bold** and our answer with blue sentences, paragraphs and foot note's linking with outcome's questions.

Outcome 1: To have (three) stronger Mekong regional networks of the key community leaders in areas of community institution in watershed resource management, eco-farm pioneering practices, and community initiatives on eco-enterprises.

I think the key word here is “**stronger**”, which I high light in red. Can you please elaborate more about this word to make it clearer? **I mean to what extent, SPERI would like the networks to be stronger?** Or stronger in what sense, to what levels, for example regarding organizational structure, local authorities, policy making influence, improvement of local people's well-being, and organizational sustainability?

As the three outcomes from the above three strategies which lead to "making change of legal situation/or another word is legal recognition and by network action, all achievements will be expended.

Yes, you understand correctly the meaning of outcome 1 . Efforts of strengthening various key community leaders is the KEY CROSS CUTTING STRATEGY of MECO-ECOTRA 2005 -2015. Key leaders are the main pillars of their communities facilitating and coordinating solutions to their own problems and concerns in order to keep their communities going by: 1)Nurturing their customary laws/community Based institutions (CBIs) through their own values and norm systems of the daily traditional land use practices which underly their own behavior with regards to returning to their natural ancestor ecologically and morally such in their daily religions. Although, by nurturing their own ways of livelihood, their norms of behavior with their own natural environment will be brought to their own generations from one to another, especially YOUNG females and males today in gardening, farming their terrace fields, and collecting natural products for daily life. The processes of learning and transferring by daily practicing within their own CBIs through key community leaders will lead to BROADENING their own wisdoms and heritages to HORIZONTAL COMMUNAL STRUCTURES⁵⁶ as well as DECENTRALIZING TRADITIONALLY (bottom up voluntarily and reputationally determined traditional spiritual leadership selecting system) their VERTICAL SYSTEM⁵⁷ from ELDERS – KEY FARMERS to YOUNG⁵⁸. (Selected young males and females from different communities

⁵⁵ To meet with the question of outcomes 6. To have a stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse

⁵⁶ To meet with the question at the outcome 1 and 5 which underly Community Based Governing by bottom up participatory and transparent for well – being and sustainability

⁵⁷ To meet with the question at the outcome 1, 2 and 5 of policy influence, participation and transparent in the context of Community Based Institution Making processes by transforming their meaning systems from elders to key farmers to young in order to cope with new complex challenges

⁵⁸ To meet with the question at the outcom 5. Term stronger in context of net – work, not individuals

with supervised by elders, key farmers under local authority's agreement will participate different courses of Eco Farming Action at different Farmer Field Schools in Simacai, in Dong le, in HEPA. Although, to addressing their own traditional knowledges amongst in natural resource management and land use planning for exchanging and enriching strategy one hand, on the other hand to initiate commonsensial skills with regards to their local meaning systems and experiences that they have been gaining from elders and key farmers under "teaching by learning – learning by doing" methodology. Gainfully, among young males and females have been mushrooming various networks rely on their interest and concerns in landscape designing and experiemental farming diary. The most important indicator from young network is that they develop different action research subjects and curriculums for learning due to their own ways of farming such as Mong, Black Thai, Kho mu, San ziu, Tay, Laos. As a result of the networking, gradually they develop different curriculums of landscape mapping and land use planning, erosion solving, rotational and alternative cropping into documents, videos, pictures included VCT's forty minute monthly broadcasting programme. In conclusion, elders, key farmers and youngs are planning to specialized all local experiences, stories and pilots through households, communities and regional farmer field schools into professional land use planning curriculums for local land use awareness raising and lobbying horizontally and vertically⁵⁹. The young females and males (students) will take over the positions and functions of elders and key farmers in their communities in order to governing their own societies. Predominantly, sooner or later young will building up their own qualities and images to be responsible for leading communities. (Reference to the MECO – ECOTRA conference "Enriching Customary Law in Natural Resource Management" – Luangphrabang statement March 31st to April 4th – 2009). Therefore, MECO-ECOTRA will initiate OUTCOME 6. The civil society discourse is expected to be willfulness, consciousness and sharing⁶⁰ social – culturally and politically correct instead of confronting and trouble making to governments. 2) These above achievements which lead to improving the ways of local governing in the area of communitiy forestry and traditional land use daily pracitces, making them more participatory and transparent with regards to their values and norms, morally and civilly. More than ever, these effect indicators from the key community leaders who have been presenting their ways of problem solvings, solution sharings, knowledge exchanging and conflict resolutions using their own traditional judiciary and network learning over the years under MECO-ECOTRA will result in making changes in local policy implementation (see anual reports at ICCO profiles 1997 – 2000 – 2003 – 2006 -2009). 3) Finally, these customary laws, traditional land use practices and key community leader networks will receive higher public and legal recognition about their using customary law to manage their societies, for example: a) Through Vietnamese National Television via VCT channel 1 broadcasting monthly forty minute programmes (ongoing from July 2009) about the key community leader networks and their coordination skills in transferring local knowledges in natural resource management, land use practices and local ecological trading under MECO-ECOTRA network actions. b) The Long lan Community Based Institution in Forest Management has been given legal recognition⁶¹ of Luangphrabang provincial government. The Long lan has full legal authority over 8,000 hectares of primary forest to manage according to customary

⁵⁹ To meet with the question of outcome 3 and 5.

⁶⁰ To meet with the question of outcomes 6. To have a stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse

⁶¹ To meet with question about legal recognition and expansion of community institution in forest management

laws. The Long lan community has now become the focus of Master and PHD research at Suphanouong University of Laos PDR and Chiangmai University. It has also become the centre for the renewal of the Northern Mong Association with the support of Laos government.

Outcome 2: To have three stronger Mekong regional legal recognition on Community Rights to Watershed Resources; and expansion of Community Institution in Forest Management;

Can you please make it clear about the two phrases that I highlight in red? What do you mean by legal recognition? Do you mean there will be a law issued by MeKong countries to recognize the community right on watershed management as result of the network's effort?

Outcome 3: To have a specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action to lobby for sustainable land use planning at the community level.

Can you please make it clear the term specialized? In the other words, what are the indicators of the specialization

Outcome 4: To have three Mekong regional pilot initiatives in community eco-enterprises towards ECOTRADING strategies

Do you think this should be output, not outcome? Outcome should be changes or result brought about by the pilots for example, guideline for sett up and operation of ECOTRADING, based on lesson learnt of the pilot, will be in place. Or the pilots will be extended to X communes or area in the region. Another thing is why Eco-enterprises have been implemented last phase already. Why this time we need to do pilot again? What are the lesson learnt and follow up of the Eco-trading pilots conducted last period?

You are probably right as ECOTRADING is always a big challenges due to its new habits of cusumers and producers. However, MECO-ECOTRA itself so far, transforming local concept of ECOTRADING into 5 theme networks in action 2006 – 2009, and its progressively, social images and reputations of ECOTRADING such Long lan case in Luangphrabang, Black Thai in Que phong with herbal products and handicraft in Simacai have been initiated. It must be continued gradually over the years to come. Lesson learned from ECOTRADING 2006 – 2009 – reference to annual reports sent to ICCO profiles for detailed. Long lan case ongoing to registred TRADE MARK for green and clean vegetable from earlier 2010 and intend to develop further Longlan Farmer Field School focus on community enterprising curriculums for training YIELDS⁶² (follow up 2006 – 2009 pilots)

Outcome 5: To have stronger Mekong regional networks of capable and confident young indigenous; Indigenous students acting in a staff – internship role will be given the opportunity to share responsibility for MECO-ECOTRA and build up their capacity as a generation of future leaders. Students acting in this way will gain confidence in the institutional skills required to improve local governance in the areas of Community Institutions in watershed management, Eco-Farming for sustainable Land use planning and Community Enterprise for fair trading.

Based on the information you added here, it seems that the outcome concentrates on individual capacity building of the students that the project hopes to achieve, rather than on network. Hence, can you please make it clear the term stronger in context of net-work, not individuals. In the other words, to what extent the net-works will be stronger. For example sustainability, policies influence, coordination, influence on thinking of the youth in the region so that they will value more their customs and traditional knowledge and not going to the cities

⁶² YIELDS = Young Indigenous Ethnic Leadership Development Strategy

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seeking for jobs (I remember at the out meeting on May 18, Mr. Tuan said the problem of youth going to cities will be addressed under this outcome).

Outcome 6: To have a stronger Mekong regional civil society discourse.

Can you please make it clear about the term stronger here? Stronger to what extent? For example, what environment is created for civil society discourse; the sustainability of the environment and the discourse; the influence of the discourse to society as a whole and to policies.

Outcome 7: generally it fine with me. Just please reflect it into financially independence from ICCO. I mean, after the project, to what extent, SPERI will be financially independent from ICCO,s support.

Fundamentally, the sustainable development framework of the grassroots democracy and conflict over injustice of the poorest through MECO-ECOTRA and ICCO is none stop due to its visionary planning, MECO-ECOTRA strategically and priorities which is very interesting similarity so far, and we hope it will nurture the same philosophy and behavior in the long term future towards the poorest injustice mission and choice.

About SPERI, financially, to be independent from ICCO support, it will become independent consultancy partner of MECO-ECOTRA and socializing its methodology and knowledges to bidding and contracting for sustainability and sustainable development for research, training, teaching, expertise and partnership with traditional civil society in all over the world in order to keep going with bottom up Participation – Share responsibility for Transparency and Equality – PASTE.

Overall discussion:

Do you think the outcomes directly focus on capacity of MECO-ECOTRA but not directly on problems raised in the proposal such as top down policies making mechanism, land ownership, exploitation of natural resources, lost of identity and traditional values or value crises. youths going to cities to seek works, ladies selling last valuable for daily surviving...etc. As I mentioned in the last letter, the theme Community based eco-enterprise deals with promotion of local products in fair trade, focusing on active participation, transparency toward fair share, fair distribution, livelihood security and ecological return. My concern was that how the outcomes reflect achievement of these? Now I would like to bring it back that what outcomes will response to these issues such as promotion of local products, transparency toward fair share, livelihood security and ecological return

Being transparent and active participation in the eco-enterprise one hand, we deal with promotion of local products with regards to care of the natural survival capacity surrounding, care of the community social – morally, on the other hand, the fair share between consumers and producers. These concepts and sensibility likely would aware to be figure out by its viable of the community customary laws and customary land and resources. In overviewing of the reason why MECO-ECOTRA identified their development towards three inter-dependently themes, and of which, the eco-enterprise theme merging later recently (only three years ago). In the other words, without community based social-morally, then eco-enterprise will be vulnerability. This explanation will clarify clearly to what extent eco-enterprise should be and why it must be *continued gradually over the years to come* . However, so far, it varies greater via Long lan case where we addressed above paragraph, for example.

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Outcome 1: To have three strong MECO-ECOTRA key farmers networks in the way that their own CBOs and CBIs can influence policy making processes in all aspects at commune level. The influence is reflected in the sense that the COBs and CBIs play crucial roles in the policy making process.

Outcome 2: Community Based Institutions in Forest Management in all project sites will be given legal recognition in forest management (social and environmental effect indicators will be concerned and governed same the ones which Long lan, Luangphrabang province had been achieved).

Outcome 3: A specialized Mekong regional network on eco-farming action for lobbying sustainable land use planning at community level will be achieved. The network is specialize in the sense that all local experiences, best practices and pilots at households, communities and regional farmer field schools are consolidated into professional land use planning curriculums. The curriculums then will be presented to local authority and will be applied in local land use planning.

Outcome 4: The present community eco-enterprises will be strengthened in term of (1) bringing more income to its members; (2) attracting more members; (3) conserving traditional knowledge and talent; and (4) empowering women and sustaining their own enterprises. (5) inspiring more niche market at different level same longlan (6) having trade mark for at least 50% of its products;

Outcome 5: A source of young leadership for Community Institutions in watershed management, Eco-Farming for sustainable Land use planning and Community Enterprise for fair trading will be built up. About 30 % of the registered students in FFSs will take over responsible task at FFSs, 20 % of them will become key coordinators of MECO-ECOTRA's (continue after elders and key farmers); and 50% of them will become a key trainers at community level by their farming model or staff of local authorities.

Outcome 6: The discourses between- MECO-ECOTRA and local policy makers is willfulness, consciousness and sharing social – culturally and politically correct. In the other words, the local policies making process is participatory, transparency, taking into account local norms and custom, and happily accepted by the two sides.

Outcome 7: SPERI will become a professional research organization in the way that (1) a documentation on method of building and facilitating MECO-ECOTRA is developed by SPERI and successfully advocated to other NGOs in the Mekong for application; (2) Contributing 40 % of the total MECO-ECOTRA's yearly budget (financial included in kind and attract more funding from other sources)/.

